

SPRING 2013

Accent

AN AVILA UNIVERSITY PUBLICATION



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INFLUENTIAL

Ronald A. Slepitz, Ph.D., CSJA
and S. Marie Joan Harris, Ph.D., CSJ

Avila's Future
*With President Slepitz
and S. Marie*

Higher Tech
*Transformational
Learning*

Steer Dinner
One for the record books!

AVILA UNIVERSITY IS SPONSORED BY THE SISTERS OF ST. JOSEPH OF CARONDELET

Letter from the President



“We are paying considerable attention to trends affecting higher education while staying true to our mission of providing students with a values-based education preparing them to make lifelong contributions to our world.”

The last few months have been a whirlwind at Avila and sticking to our mission is, indeed, the glue that holds us together. As many of you know, in early February we had a very public opportunity to help a wonderful family with the gift of scholarship. In 2012, **Scott and Lauren Sterling** from Blue Springs, Missouri adopted five Peruvian siblings who lost their parents to tuberculosis. ABC’s *The View* was planning a story on the Sterlings’ amazing love and leap of faith and wanted to fulfill the children’s dreams of a college education. Because of our values-based education, our commitment to community service, and our diverse student population, Avila’s offer of scholarships and support was selected to be the right university for the Sterling family.

Your generous support continues to afford us the privilege of awarding scholarships. Generosity was abundant at the 37th Annual Steer Dinner and Auction February 16. Under the leadership of **John and Nancy McCarthy**, honorary chairs, and **Lauren McCarthy ’07** and **Ana Valdez ’96**, event co-chairs, this year’s gala was record-breaking, raising nearly \$614,000 (a 17% increase over the previous year). As a result, Avila will be opening more doors for deserving students.

Students’ commitment to community involvement earned Avila inclusion on the **President’s Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll** for the fifth consecutive year. Additionally, our faculty continues to be exemplary. **Carol Coburn, Ph.D.**, professor in religious studies and women’s studies participated in an invitation-only three-day *Congressional Civil Rights Pilgrimage to Alabama*. Look inside for the complete story.

What is next on our journey? I recently attended a national symposium where mega-trends affecting higher education were a prominent point of conversation. The landscape of higher education is being dramatically impacted by considerations such as cost, value and return on investment of a college degree, shifts in the delivery of learning, the impact of technology and globalism and demographic shifts of college attendees. We are paying considerable attention to trends affecting higher education while staying true to our mission of providing students with a values-based education preparing them to make lifelong contributions to our world.

Sister Marie and I examine Avila’s future in the pages of this magazine. You will see our six Centennial Initiatives guided by our strategic plan that will carry us into our 100th year. Our mission is at the core of the work. We believe our fidelity to it guides our success along the journey. We are grateful that you are with us for the ride.

Gratefully,

Ronald A. Slepitza, Ph.D., CSJA
President

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Avila President

Ronald A. Slepitz, Ph.D., CSJA

Vice President for Advancement and External Relations

Angie Heer, CFRE

Editor

Ann O'Meara, MBA

Assistant Vice President

Marketing and Communication

Lead Writer

Bob Luder

Contributing Writers

Robin Rowland

Contributing Photographers

Nicole Burkhart

Bob Luder

Designer

Michael Kight, MA

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Contact Us!

Readers may send comments, story ideas or letters to:

Accent

Avila University

11901 Wornall Road

Kansas City, Missouri 64145

816.501.2422

Advancement@avila.edu

Avila University

816.942.8400

Advancement

816.501.2450

Alumni Relations

816.501.3780

Athletics

816.501.3634

Bookstore

816.501.3630

www.avila.edu

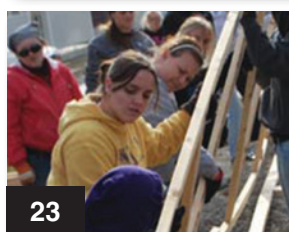
SPRING 2013



ON THE Cover

A Q&A with President Ron Slepitz, Ph.D., CSJA,
and S. Marie Joan Harris, Ph.D., CSJ

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"These leaders in philanthropy support Avila's initiatives and understand that a great university can have a great impact on our community – and our world."

Ron Slepitzka, Ph.D., CSJA

Fr. Medaille Society Members from left to right: Robert F. Hartsook, JD, EdD, Matthew Beem, President & CEO, Hartsook Companies, Inc.; Tom Olofson, Jeanne Hamilton Olofson '92, '94, '11; President Ron Slepitzka, Ph.D., CSJA; Vita Goppert '72; Tom Goppert, Executive Director, The Goppert Foundation; and Sister Helen Flemington, CSJ.

Philanthropists Inducted into Fr. Medaille Society

Eight benefactors recognized and celebrated for generous support

Avila University recognized and thanked several of its top supporters, honoring them as inaugural members of the Father Jean Pierre Medaille Society during a President's Circle reception Sept. 27 on the Jeanne Hamilton Olofson Plaza. The distinguished group — The Goppert Foundation, Vita M. Goppert '72; Robert Hartsook/Hartsook Companies Inc.; The Kresge Foundation; The J.E. and L.E. Mabee Foundation; Tom and Jeanne Olofson '92, '94, '11; and the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet — became the first induction class into the Fr. Medaille Society as lifetime contributors of \$1 million or more to Avila.

The society was named after Father Jean Pierre Medaille, the Jesuit priest who founded the Sisters of St. Joseph in 1646

in France. Two centuries later, six Sisters came to the U.S. and settled in Carondelet, near St. Louis. The Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet founded Avila in 1916.

Each member of the Medaille Society was recognized by President Slepitzka and bestowed a Medal of Honor and a purple (Avila's signature color) crystal vase filled with white lilies, symbolic of St. Joseph.

"All of these donors recognize Avila not just for what it is," Slepitzka said, "but also for what it can be, and are supportive of our quest for ongoing improvement and excellence. They have and continue to make a difference in the lives of thousands of Avila students." 🌹



"This ensures our children get an American education and bright future. We are so grateful."

Lauren Sterling

Pictured are, left to right, The View co-host Sherri Shepherd, co-host Elisabeth Hasselbeck, Yhonson, Gerson, Sibila, Betsi, Laney, Joel Sterling, co-host Joy Behar, President Ron Slepitzza, Ph.D., CSJA, Ann O'Meara, Avila's assistant vice president of marketing and communications, and Oscar-winning co-host Whoopi Goldberg. Back row: Logan, Scott and Lauren Sterling. Photo credit: Lorenzo Bevilaqua/ABC

President Surprises Family with Gift of Education on ABC's *The View*

Avila University President Ron Slepitzza, Ph.D., CSJA, appeared on the hit ABC show "The View" Feb. 6 and surprised the Sterling family of Blue Springs, Mo. by offering \$500,000 in scholarships for their seven children. Lauren and Scott Sterling's family grew by five when the couple recently adopted five Peruvian orphans. "This ensures our children get an American education and bright future. We are so grateful," said Lauren Sterling. Slepitzza said, "What the Sterlings have done touches our hearts, and this is an opportunity where everyone can say 'YES' and help this wonderful family. We are honored to live our mission in the tradition of our founding Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet, to serve the dear neighbor without distinction." Since the broadcast, Lauren and Scott Sterling attended Avila's annual Steer Dinner & Auction, and the entire family visited campus and spoke with Avila officials about ways to get the children involved with University activities this summer. 📷





Roots Run Deep

Alumni and Advantage assistant dean has been at Avila for half of her life

It's fair to say that Kari Clevenger '00, '06 has grown up at Avila University.

In fact, Clevenger, the assistant dean of Avila's School of Professional Studies, perhaps better known as the Avila Advantage program, has been connected with the University literally for half of her young life.

"Avila has been exceptionally wonderful to me," she said. "I've been able to really flourish here. It's been very fulfilling."

Clevenger's stay at Avila began back in 1996 as a wide-eyed freshman and recent graduate of Kickapoo High School in her hometown of Springfield, Mo. In addition to being a top-notch student, she was known more for her prowess in running cross country than playing basketball. But her heart was in hoops and that, along with the lure of the Kansas City area and a strong communications program, was what brought her to Avila.

The success she started in high school continued for Clevenger at Avila, both in the classroom and on the basketball court. She started for then-coach Jim

McMurray at point guard, eventually earning all-Midlands Collegiate Athletics Conference honors and an All-America Scholar-Athlete designation from the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics. Clevenger is the Eagles women's basketball program's all-time leader in assists, steals and minutes played. She is in the Avila athletics hall of fame.

Another reason Clevenger came to Avila was a friendship she began with S. Ann Dominic, CSJ, who lived and worked on campus at the time. In addition to being a leader at Avila in terms of education and values, S. Ann also was a huge sports fan who often attended Eagles games and cheered on the teams ... and, according to Clevenger, also wasn't above chewing a bit on the referees.

"She was a wonderfully fascinating lady with a gentle soul and zest for life," Clevenger said. "She was very passionate about Avila and all that it stood for."

S. Ann also worked part-time with Avila Advantage, and it was through

that friendship that Clevenger was genuinely enthused to begin working there immediately after graduating in May of 2000. Starting as an office manager, she received her first promotion within her first three months and has worked her way up since. Working in Advantage, it became only natural for her to pursue a graduate degree, and she completed her master's in organizational development in August 2006, the first graduating class to earn that degree at Avila.

As assistant dean, Clevenger said she spends much of her time advising students, providing guidance and working with systems management within the department's office. She also teaches three classes for Advantage.

"The students swear by her," said Steve Illiff, Ph.D., dean of the School of Professional Studies. "Many have e-mailed me saying that if it wasn't for Kari, they would not have continued on to finish their degree. Advantage stands strong on service to students, going the extra mile to get them what they need to be successful. Kari is the backbone of that service."

Clevenger also has assisted Coach Larry Williams with the women's basketball program the past several years.

Clevenger met her husband, Brandon, at Avila, and she said just about everything her four-year-old daughter Hadley wears is purple.

"It's an integral part of our lives," she said.

"The people at Avila have helped shape me into the person I am today; this relationship was simply meant to be," Clevenger said. "I feel

that it is beyond time to pay my gratitude forward.

"I'm deeply passionate about preparing my students for the rigors of academia and believe whole-heartedly in the vast rewards that a quality education can provide. There's a real sense of family here, a sense of empowering people to go on and live successful, productive lives. It's an amazing feeling being just a tiny part of that." 🍇

"The people at Avila have helped shape me into the person I am today."

COLTON DIXON

A MESSENGER
2012 AMERICAN IDOL CONTENDER

Colton Dixon, currently on top of the U.S. Christian and U.S. Gospel Charts and 2012 season top-10 finalist on the Fox hit TV show, *American Idol*, performed for about 2,400 enthusiastic fans the evening of Feb. 7 inside Mabee Fieldhouse on the Avila University campus. Dixon hosted a release party for his just-released CD, "A Messenger," and had the crowd on its feet, clapping and screaming, with his songs about faith, friendship and love. After nearly an hour of music and banter with his audience, Dixon spent nearly as much time signing autographs and taking pictures with fans.

The event was sponsored by K-LOVE and Air 1 radio stations, Kansas City's home for contemporary music.



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Avila University – Past, Present and Future

*Inspired
Insightful
Integrated
Inclusive
Innovative
Influential*

State of the University: A Q&A with President Ron Slepitza, Ph.D., CSJA, and S. Marie Joan Harris, Ph.D., CSJ

They sit like a sentry, watching over and embracing all who enter or leave the front entrance of Blasco Hall. At Avila University, they're commonly referred to as the 'T' words – Inspired, Insightful, Integrated, Inclusive, Innovative and Influential. They speak directly to the mission and values of the University, not just values students see and experience on campus during their learning and growing here, but the kind of values Avila strives to instill in students for the rest of their lives as they go out into the world.

"What we really focus on at Avila is, what happens to students? What do they become?" said President Ron Slepitza, Ph.D., CSJA. "The 'I' words are really a description of what we're seeking in a graduate, but at the same time, they describe what we like to see in our learning environment."

"The first three 'I' words are really internal qualities of someone and also the environment. We're trying to create an inspired, insightful, integrated learning environment as well as an inspired, insightful, integrated person who engages the world. We want to create a graduate who can go out in the world and be inclusive, understanding how to build effective teams and work in a world that is very diverse; innovative, so

that they can look for new ideas, put together knowledge in new ways and find ways of creating change that is necessary in today's world. Then, that student can go out and make a difference in the world, hence be influential.

"Similarly, as a CSJ-sponsored university, we are welcoming of all in the interest of serving the dear neighbor. We are a learning environment that considers new ideas, processes and systems to enhance learning and better prepare our students. We are a university that serves the community well and that makes a difference through that service."

As Avila University looks back on an unprecedented period of growth, development and innovation, and looks to a bright future full of the same – not to

mention a 100-year anniversary celebration in a mere three years – *Accent* spoke to the University's two most influential leaders – President Slepitza and Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs S. Marie Joan Harris, Ph.D., CSJ.

Let's talk a bit about where we've been and how we've grown the last 3-5 years.

RS: We've improved campus and made it more welcoming and engaging to students and the community. As part of our **Campus Life Initiative**, one of six Centennial Initiatives, we've done more renovation and new construction in the last few years than in the last 50. We've had the largest first-year class in our history in the last year. We've had the largest enrollment in our history, and we

have our most academically qualified class in our history based on ACT scores. Our attractive campus environment and engaged faculty give our students experiences that enrich their learning, drive home the lessons faculty are teaching in a practical way, and prepare them for entering the world.

MH: In the spirit of the Sisters of St. Joseph we keep asking, what are the needs of the community and what are the needs of our students? We have made a number of changes in the past three or four years. We've introduced some new programs – criminology, software engineering, sports communication, kinesiology. We've re-instituted foreign language because of the importance of the global perspective. We have increased the number of study-travel courses, with travel to Germany, Guatemala, Canada and India this semester. We are preparing students to be successful and productive citizens in a global community.

We've addressed our adult students. We've added a master's program in management with concentrations in fundraising and project management and an RN to BSN program. Currently, we are looking at additional graduate programs to meet the needs of our community.

In terms of the learning environment, our classrooms look a lot different than they did four or five years ago. Students today like to work in groups, so we have flexible seating within classrooms, computer technology and places in the library to gather for group projects. Recently, we have acquired the technology to do lecture-capture, which enables a student to watch the video of a professor's lecture together with all the support materials displayed during the class from anywhere there is an in-

ternet connection. We're in the process of introducing a new learning platform called Canvas and will offer our first online degrees in the fall. We recognize that students use technology in all aspects of their lives. We are adapting the learning environment to use technology while at the same time maintaining classroom interactions so that students benefit from the best aspects of both.

RS: We're working hard to engage our alumni, to continue to support their own learning and have them engage our students. Some of these new learning technologies will help them continue their education, enhance their skills and remain connected with the University.

What is Avila doing now to try to prepare students as they graduate and go forge their places in the world?

RS: One of the things that's really interesting is a new partnership we're engaging in that's designed to complement the 206,000 hours of service learning and community service our students contribute. It teaches students how to build a professional network of support people and then leverage relationships in those networks so they can land that first job and the jobs that will follow. In addition, we ask them to reflect upon what they've learned and put it into practice so they are prepared to be successful when they graduate. We think this adds an additional element to what makes an Avila education so special.

MH: We're seeing several programs introducing a component early in the major where students shadow professionals and have the opportunity to understand what somebody in that career does. Many of our students think they

want to follow a particular career path but do not know what is involved. That's particularly true in the health care, business and education areas. I think these early immersion programs help clarify goals and focus. Of course, our core curriculum and courses in the major provide the foundation and preparation necessary for our graduates to be successful contributors to our community.

RS: This is a real opportunity not just for our students, but for our alumni, because they have some perspective on the decisions they had to make in their careers. Alumni have insight they can offer to our current students and when they do, they offer insights that are invaluable to those students.

What are some components of the University's strategic plan for the next five years?

RS: *Learning* is rapidly changing. The world is rapidly changing. Our strategic plan anticipates how we need to adapt as a university to help accommodate those changes. How does the curriculum need to change? How does what we teach and how we teach need to change? How do we help students be innovative? For example, you'll see in the strategic plan an initiative to enhance our students' abilities to engage in the arts. Through our **Creative Arts Initiative**, students are encouraged to think more imaginatively and creatively. Imaginative and creative thinking is the foundation of innovation. When practically applied, the results can be new and innovative. At the same time, we want to help our students think critically, and therefore involvement in the sciences and the humanities is how we do that. We want students to see that learning is no longer discipline specific,



but cuts across boundaries. Thirty-five percent of our students are minority or international, both at the undergraduate and graduate levels. This diversity of students is an asset in preparing our students to be successful. Our students touch the world in the classroom, but we want them to also see that the world is a much larger place than Kansas City.

MH: We are creating the Center for Global Studies and Social Justice as part of our **Global Community Initiative** that will address our mission to prepare students for life-long contributions to the global community. The Center will bring in speakers, assist in the development of opportunities to introduce global perspectives across the curriculum and create partnerships with groups in other countries. As we consider the future, our strategic direction flows from the mission and the values of the Sisters of St. Joseph and their heritage at the University. Thus, one of our initiatives is the **Sisters of St. Joseph Heritage, Spirituality & Service Initiative**. We are excited that Avila has been chosen to house the archives of the U.S. Federation of the Sisters of St. Joseph. This complements our efforts to expand our current archive on Women Religious along with our University archives. We hope these collections will enable Avila to be a place recognized nationally and perhaps internationally as a center for scholarly research on Sisters and their contributions to society.

How do you anticipate students will have evolved five years from now in terms of what they're looking for in higher education? Do you sense any dramatic shifts in methods of learning?

MH: I've been at Avila for 42 years and I have to say that the traditional students basically are the same. They

come to Avila as 18-year-olds to follow their dreams. And so, in that respect, I don't think there's going to be a change. I think they'll still come needing to develop those important skills that are going to allow them to be flexible lifelong learners. In the past, students would come to college, earn their degree and enter a job they'd hold for several years. The students today are going to have multiple jobs in their lifetimes. That makes the University focus on not only providing them with current knowledge but also skills that allow them to be lifelong learners. Basic to those skills are critical thinking, communication, the ability to work together in teams and an understanding of a global perspective. That is the heart of education at Avila.

How they learn will be different. As technology evolves, it enriches and allows new things to happen in the classroom. What used to take a good amount of time spent learning facts and pieces of information now can easily be looked up with a few strikes of a computer keyboard. That means the classroom provides the opportunity to do more problem-solving, to do case studies, to do projects, to work together, to answer questions and apply knowledge, all which are part of our **Transformational Learning Environment Initiative**.

The traditional-aged students will come to Avila because they love personal attention and care. We have excellent faculty here. Students experience this and place a high value on it. I think we will always be a university that has that personal touch.

RS: I suspect that students will still rely heavily on financial aid and scholarships. We'll continue to provide scholarships to make education affordable. Currently, we award more than \$10 million annually in financial aid. At the same time, I think we'll seek to engage alumni throughout their lives so that they look to us to continue their educations. There's a lot of information out there. We'll teach how to leverage it for growth and development and how to act wisely with information. We'll help students discern what's more effective, applicable, and apply it to move your life forward. These are some of the lessons students will take from Avila into the world.

"Learning is rapidly changing. The world is rapidly changing. Our strategic plan anticipates how we need to adapt as a university to help accommodate those changes."

Ron Slepitz, Ph.D., CSJA

What is your vision for Avila University's interaction with the community? Are there any specific initiatives planned to get the community more involved?

RS: Our students are very, very involved. When I use the words, '206,000 hours of service learning and community service,' another way of saying that is about one month of full-time work for every student here. That's about \$4 million going back into the local economy. It's a way students experience the world and lessons they will need when they graduate. We also invite the community onto campus. For example, last fall, as part of the Truman Lecture Series, we had Louis Zamperini speak – he was the subject of the book, *Unbroken*. Our first-year students read that book, and as Louis spoke about his life journey of redemption, I saw students' heads nod and hearts open. Our campus is not



surrounded by walls and fences. We welcome the community with open arms. We ask them to eat in our dining hall, use our chapel, come into our library, use our facilities, because we want to be integral. Learning today is interactive and learning outcomes are better for it.

MH: I think **Jerusalem Farm** (an Avila-sponsored service retreat in Kansas City, Mo.) is one of the ways we have found to work with the community. It is an opportunity for faculty, staff and students to respond to community needs. The **Center for Global Studies and Social Justice** will provide a wonderful opportunity to interface with all the ethnic groups represented in Kansas City. We hope to form strong partnerships with many of these groups. Our emphasis on establishing a **Performing Arts Center** has its roots in a partnership with a community group, Theatre for Young America. Numerous classes do projects for non-profits, incorporate service-learning, place students in K-12 classrooms and clinical sites. These are ways to serve the community in a way that uses our students' and our faculty's talents.

What do you see campus looking like in five years?

RS: As part of our **Future Healthcare Leaders Initiative**, we will have completed the renovation of the Science & Health Complex in O'Reilly Hall. We will have completed the renovation of the Learning Commons in the current Hooley-Bundschu Library. We'll have a major addition to the performing arts area.

MH: When I arrived in 1970, there were four buildings on campus. I remember we had students housed in local apartments until we could get a



Tom Goppert and President Ron Slepitz, Ph.D., CSJA

Goppert Foundation Contributes Leadership Gift of \$600,000 to Centennial Initiatives, Other Leaders Follow Suit

The Goppert Foundation, a longtime partner and cherished member of the Avila University family, recently made a generous contribution of \$600,000 to Avila's Future Health Care Leaders and Transformational Learning Environment Initiatives. Their support will help transform Avila's library into a state-of-the-art Learning Commons and establish a Science & Health Complex in O'Reilly Hall with new science labs and enhanced technology.

"The Goppert Foundation's investment in Avila has truly helped shape the University into the institution it is today," said President Ron Slepitz, Ph.D., CSJA. "Their support has guided Avila over the past several decades, helping to provide a unique and powerful educational experience for students – many of whom might not otherwise have been able to pursue their dream of a higher education."

The Goppert Foundation and the Goppert Family has a tradition of investing in our community, providing a financial safety net for students and helping students access higher education. "The Goppert Foundation has always placed a high value on higher education," said Foundation Executive Director Tom Goppert. "It's been our pleasure over the years to work closely with Avila University, and it is truly amazing that it has been almost 100 years that Avila has been making a difference in the lives of so many students. The Goppert Foundation is pleased to continue to help broaden the powerful learning experience that Avila provides."

In addition to the Goppert Foundation, other leaders, alumni and friends have contributed leadership gifts to help accomplish the Centennial Initiatives, including the following generous donors that have committed gifts at the \$100,000 level or higher. Avila is grateful for their support and leadership!

Don & Christine Alexander

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John & Nancy McCarthy

Thomas & Sharon McCullough

Tom & Jeanne '92, '94, '11 Olofson

Ronald & Suzanne Slepitz

The Sunderland Foundation

Jim & Ruth Willcox

In Memory of Glenna Wylie



second residence hall. There were only about 200 or 300 students in the college and it had just gone co-educational. We are a university now. Our campus has been transformed and I expect it to continue to be so. This is a vital and intellectually challenging place.

What are the resources needed to accomplish all of this?

RS: We're in the early phases of a comprehensive campaign scheduled to be completed by 2017. It has a goal of \$43 million, which is a very ambitious goal. We've raised more than \$24 million toward it thanks to alumni, friends, faculty and staff. University leaders, alumni and friends have stepped up more than ever before to support our initiatives. We are grateful for their support and belief in our mission. I am proud to say 100 percent of our faculty and staff has contributed to the Centennial Initiatives. We still have about \$18 million to raise, but we are off to a very good start.

Are plans underway to celebrate Avila's centennial in 2016?

RS: The 100th anniversary is a backward-looking celebration of all that came before and who made that possible. At the same time, it's a time to renew and ask, 'How do we commit to the future?' Right now, we're trying to move the future forward with the people we have in exciting ways.

MH: We are beginning the planning. Some faculty and staff are already engaging alums, staff and students to make this a wonderful celebration.

I reflect on the history of the University and where we are going every morning when I walk across the Jeanne Hamilton Olofson Plaza into the main entrance to Blasco Hall. I walk across the bricks with the names of all the sisters who served here and who shaped and formed this University. They are our heritage. In the front of Blasco, I see the 'I' words, and it's who we are right now and who we hope we'll be in the future. It's a wonderful reminder to have that entrance into Blasco. Each day I come to work, the name of some sister will catch my eye, and if she's alive I say a prayer to her. If she's deceased, I ask her to pray for us today. It's a gift to be associated with a University with such a rich heritage and such a promising future. 🙏



"I walk across the bricks with the names of all the sisters who served here and who shaped and formed this University. They are our heritage."



Centennial Initiatives

The Centennial Initiatives, which will culminate during our 100th anniversary, will make a lasting impact on Avila's educational, spiritual and physical environment and will help thousands of students realize their dreams of a college education.

Transformational Learning Environment

The Transformational Learning Environment Initiative strengthens Avila's core curriculum and add state-of-the-art learning technologies to impact program offerings, including humanities, social sciences, natural sciences, education and graduate studies. The key piece of this initiative includes the transformation of the Hooley-Bundschu Library into a Learning Commons that provides students with improved technology, collaborative study spaces and writing labs.

(see below)

Global Community

The Global Community Initiative infuses a global perspective in Avila's curriculum and provides critical multicultural study experiences to students. Increased opportunities for international study abroad, foreign language courses and a global speaker series and seminar program are included in this initiative. Learning in a global community fosters multicultural dialogue and encourages students to be inclusive in our diverse world.

Future Healthcare Leaders

The Future Healthcare Leaders Initiative expands nursing and health sciences programs to meet the growing demand for healthcare providers. This includes the renovation of O'Rielly Hall's chemistry, microbiology and anatomy and physiology labs to create a Science and Health Complex. It also includes a 50 percent expansion of the traditional BSN program. The RN to BSN degree completion program was added in 2012.

Sisters of St. Joseph Spirituality and Service

The Sisters of St. Joseph Spirituality and Service Initiative honors our Catholic heritage by providing opportunities for students, faculty and staff to grow in faith and service to the community. In addition to expanding the University's campus ministry, a campus site to house the permanent home of the archives of the U.S. Federation of the Sisters of St. Joseph and Women Religious Collection will be constructed. A reflection space and garden, including statues of St. Teresa and Mother St. John Fontbonne, will complete this work.

Creative Arts

The Creative Arts initiative heightens opportunities for students to be innovative and develop whole-brain thinking, and provides the broader community with more opportunities to experience the creative arts. The key component is the establishment of a \$10 million Performing Arts Center on campus to expand creative arts programming and enhance community access to performing arts, film screenings, lecture series, seminars and other events.

Campus Life

The Campus Life Initiative enhances the collegial experience at Avila. Avila added its fourth residence hall, Avila Hall, in September, 2012 and recently expanded and renovated the dining hall in Marian Student Center. The athletics complex was renovated with the addition of a basketball pavilion and an all-weather-turfed field that can host football, baseball, softball and soccer games resulting in an increasingly vibrant living and learning environment.

Hooley-Bundschu Library: Learning Commons Project (projected completion date: Fall 2014)





Harry Truman Lecture Series



Nearly 500 people attended the **Truman Lecture Series** on November 8, 2012. The series featured **Louis Zamperini**, WWII Prisoner of war, 1936 American Olympian, and subject of *The New York Times* bestseller, *Unbroken: A World War II Story of Survival, Resilience, and Redemption* by **Laura Hillenbrand**. *Unbroken* was the common reading book for Avila's first year students. Ron Slepitzka led the program that included panel discussions, Louis' keynote address, the Avila singers and University singers. Past Truman Lecturers include: William F. Buckley, Clarence M. Kelley, and Sr. Helen Prejean, CSJ.



WWII Panelists (from left to right): Ron Slepitzka, Avila University President, Raymond Geselbracht from the Harry S. Truman Library, Carl Freeman, WWII Veteran, U.S. Marines Capt. Jim Phippen, retired, Sue Ellen McCalley, Ph.D., Professor of Education and Psychology at Avila, Committee Chair.



"I realize every day in class that this was meant for me. It's very rewarding."

Elected to Serve

Samantha Smith, an Avila University senior social work student, was elected by statewide social work peers to serve on the board of directors for the national Association of Social Workers (NASW), Missouri chapter.

"The biggest exposure that a social work student can get is being part of a professional organization, especially as a board member of the NASW," said Francis Origanti, Ph.D., chair of Avila's social work department. "Networking is key when you are in social work practice."

It was relatives that helped bring Smith to Avila. "I always wanted to go to Avila as long as I can remember," Smith said. "It's more than lived up to my expectations. Avila has set a foundation to provide me confidence, resources and networking opportunities."

One of those opportunities, she said, is interning with Sunflower House in Shawnee, Kan., a non-profit advocacy center for children. Smith plans on entering graduate school and would like to move into grant-writing, legislation and policy work. Her election to the NASW Board will provide a valuable background.

"It's a real exciting time," she said. "I'm passionate about the work." 📸

Taking the Long Road

Business student's journey to Avila started half a world away

Middle America sits half a world away from his native Malta in geographical distance and a full world away in culture. Yet, Justin Scicluna said he can't imagine obtaining a better education than he's received at Avila University.

"It's been a really good experience for me," said Scicluna, who graduates in December with a bachelor degree in finance. "Avila has a great faculty willing to work with students. Class sizes are small, so it's easier to learn, I think, and get help when you need it.

"I'm sure I'll be able to apply skills I learned here in the work force."

Scicluna's path to Avila was circuitous to say the least. He was born on Malta, a tiny island south of Sicily in the middle of the Mediterranean Sea. When he was 13, he moved with his American-born mother to West Plains, Mo., where he excelled in school and on the soccer field. He originally enrolled at nearby Missouri State University in Springfield. But, he said it just never felt like the right fit.

When Avila soccer coach Chris Clements found out Scicluna was shopping for a new university, he contacted Scicluna's high school coach and asked Scicluna to make a visit. Once on campus, he was sold.

Scicluna immersed himself in soccer and Avila's business classes. He said he especially appreciated the tutelage of professors like Brian Buckler, Ph.D., professor of marketing, who taught him the importance of networking, and Daniel George, Ph.D., associate professor of management, who taught him how to be a successful business manager by applying all the business tools he learned in his courses.

Scicluna's hard work led him to a pair of internships which paid off as well. He assisted two financial advisors with administrative work for Midwest Financial and entered data and organized files for stock brokers at VSR Financial.

He has a job as a financial advisor awaiting him at Edward Jones – helping people reach their future financial goals - once he passes a couple of certification exams in March.

"I learned at Avila to study really well, and that will help me be successful in taking these exams," Scicluna said. "I'll get a couple years' experience and then come back and get my master's."

Scicluna said he wouldn't hesitate in pursuing his graduate degree at Avila.

"Overall, it's been a great experience, and the faculty at Avila are a big part of it," Scicluna said. "They're willing to help their students in a way you don't typically get at bigger schools." 🏆

"They're willing to help their students in a way you don't typically get at bigger schools."



Learning System Elevates Communication



canvas
BY INSTRUCTURE

When it came time to select a new learning management system (LMS) for Avila University, the qualities and functionality of Canvas made for an easy choice.

It basically all comes down to a single word: communication.

"Canvas pretty much regards itself as a hub for communication," said Mark Eaton, Ph.D., associate vice president for instructional technology at Avila and one of the people spearheading the project of transferring the University's LMS from Angel to Canvas. "Everything about Canvas is designed to enhance communication between everybody."

The Academic Council for Instructional Resources (ACIR) met last April to review evaluations of all the various new LMS systems available today. The review included evaluations of pedagogical, administrative and system considerations. ACIR recommended Canvas because of its ease of use and depth of features which allow faculty to incorporate online collaboration and social networking into their curriculum design.

"We made sure we made an education decision before a systems decision," Eaton said. "We based the decision on simplicity of use, but it's also very powerful in its collaborative tools."

Canvas is capable of working with seven different social networking services. It allows multiple email addresses and cell phone numbers – and, has applications for both iPhones and Androids – so that students can work together on assignments without being in the same room. Students can use their favorite social media application to get their homework assignments, check the class calendar, look at their grades and communicate with their professors – all with very few clicks of a mouse or phone key pad.

"We're in the middle of a pilot program," Eaton said. According to Eaton, currently 12 faculty members in 30 different course sections, involving more than 600 students, are piloting Canvas. Thus far, feedback has been very positive.

"For me, it's all about the student experience, efficiency of work flow, and effectiveness with communication with students," said Ken Parsons, Ph.D., assistant professor philosophy and chair of religious studies. "Just the ability to get things done is remarkably better with Canvas."

"With Canvas, students can get whatever they want in any way they want," said Jordan Wagge, Ph.D., assistant professor of psychology.

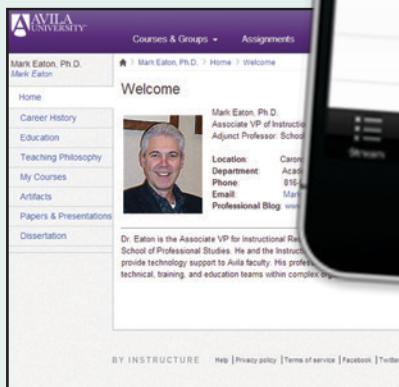
Morgan Brucks, one of Wagge's students, said Canvas took about five minutes to learn how to navigate the system.

"Taking quizzes on Canvas seems to be easier, and grades are easily found," Brucks said. "I tend to check my grades several times a week, and Canvas is always updated with my most recent grades."

Andria Stokes, Ed.D., director of The Center for Transformational Learning, has put together professional development offerings which will provide opportunities where faculty can bring in work and design courses through next fall.

This summer, Canvas will be taught to Advantage students.

"It helps participants manage time, and it's mobile," Eaton said. "It lets users decide how they want information pushed out to them. We're pretty excited about it. By fall of next year, we'll have all of our courses supported by Canvas." 📱



Going Higher Tech

Professor uses sabbatical to modernize curriculum

Often, a faculty sabbatical looks something like this: The faculty member identifies a peer or two at another school, and he or she travels to that school to undertake a research project.

Greg Fitch, Ph.D., professor of biology at Avila University, had other ideas for the sabbatical he took during the fall 2012 semester, and those ideas are keeping students in Avila's School of Science and Health on the cutting edge of the latest learning technologies.

"On this sabbatical, I had some teaching ideas I wanted to try that required scores of hours of preparation work," Fitch said from his office in O'Rielly Hall. "What it essentially boiled down to was re-designing the anatomy and physiology course."

What it came down to was modernizing the class to take full advantage of today's technology. For the laboratory portion of the class, Fitch did away with textbooks and took his students online. He obtained a computer program which allows students to perform virtual dissections of cadavers. For months and hours upon hours, he customized the program to fit the specific needs of his students. He also customized the quizzes which come with the virtual dissections.

Fitch also collaborated with two colleagues and made changes to the lecture portion of the course to inject more information about how scientists in health care-related fields make decisions about clinically-related topics.

"I want to talk a lot about thinking skills," he said. "And, I want to do more than just ask students to try these skills, I want them to actually learn how to do them."

"I'm really glad I'm here," Fitch said. "Avila is an enjoyable place to work."

Fitch said this was the second sabbatical he's taken since coming to Avila. About eight years ago, he spent a semester in the entomology department at Kansas State University studying pests of certain plants.

This latest, "different" kind of sabbatical couldn't have come at a more opportune time, he said.

"The timing of this was perfect because, when Room 215 (the anatomy and physiology lab in O'Rielly) was renovated, we put a bunch of terrific technology in there, including laptop computers and lecture capture technology," he said. "The changes I've made to the course wouldn't have worked nearly as well if 215 hadn't become what it is today."

"I think the students have really enjoyed it."



"The timing of this was perfect because, when Room 215 was renovated, we put a bunch of terrific technology in there, including laptop computers and lecture capture technology."



Coburn Re-traces Civil Rights March

Several years ago, Carol Coburn, Ph.D. served as an academic advisor for a Public Broadcasting System documentary detailing the lives of women who joined the civil rights march in Selma, Ala. in the 1960s.

Coburn, professor in religious studies and women's studies in Avila University's College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences, recently had the chance to become re-acquainted with that area of the U.S. She was invited by the Faith and Politics Institute in Washington D.C. to participate in a three-day Congressional Civil Rights Pilgrimage to Alabama. Led by Congressman and American civil rights leader John Lewis, Coburn was part of a bipartisan, interfaith delegation from across the country that took the historic pilgrimage to Birmingham, Montgomery and Selma, including Vice President Joe Biden.

The delegation traveled together and visited historic civil rights sites, including churches, memorials and museums. The pilgrimage concluded with a church service in Brown Chapel and a march across the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma, the famous site of the conflict of "Bloody Sunday" on March 7, 1965, when armed officers attacked peaceful civil rights demonstra-

tors attempting to march to the state capital of Montgomery.

"We flew to Tuscaloosa, the site of the integration standoff with Gov. George Wallace at the University of Alabama in 1963," Coburn said. "It was basically a commemoration of what took place. I was very excited to be able to go."

The pilgrimage commemorated the 150th anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation, the 50th anniversaries of the desegregation of the University of Alabama, Martin Luther King Jr.'s letter from a Birmingham jail, the Children's March, the March on Washington and the bombing of the 16th Street Baptist Church in Birmingham.

What made the trip all the more relevant to Coburn was the presence of Antona Ebo, one of six Catholic nuns who were on the original march on Selma in 1965. She was one of the six Sisters – two of whom were Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet – who collectively became known as "The Sisters of Selma."



Carol Coburn, Ph.D., and S. Antona Ebo cross the historic Edmund Pettus Bridge with Vice President Joe Biden, John Lewis and other civil rights leaders. (photo: Robert Biden)

From 2002-07, Coburn was an academic advisor for the PBS documentary film, "Sisters of Selma: Bearing Witness for Change."

"I was very, very honored to be part of the delegation," Coburn said. "Working on the film was very powerful for me. I believe the Catholic sisters who marched for voting rights in Selma, Ala. in 1965 made a profound statement about their willingness to publically witness on behalf of justice and human rights. What many people don't realize is that the events in the American civil rights movement had repercussions around the world and for the last half century have been an important model of social activism and non-violent resistance for oppressed peoples."

"It was one of those times I felt I was doing something really significant. You don't often get that." 🙏



from Avila's Social Network

"In eight years of coaching, I had never visited the Hy-Vee Shootout until this year. You guys are to be commended for running a first class event. I know for certain how much of a difference it can make."

Dylan Dudley — Central Missouri Basketball

"SO EXCITED – I spoke with an advisor today and I am one step closer to getting my new degree started."

Veronica Duchene Weddle — Facebook post

"WooHoo ... congratulations! My daughter is graduating from Avila in May. She has had a great experience!"

Patti Brady Schwartz — Facebook post

"Many thanks to the *Miracle Worker* cast at Avila University. They have had a spectacular run and have reiterated the reason why I do theatre."

Ezekiel Bocklage — Twitter

Students in Avila's School of Visual and Communication Arts helped put together a short video for an organization that deals with teenage bullying.

"Thanks to our friends at Avila University for putting together this 30 sec short about our program: <http://fb.me/1VEWtDRkW>"

FightClubKC — Twitter

"What an amazing turnout last night! 2,400 guests enjoyed the Colton Dixon concert in the Mabee Fieldhouse. KLOVE, Air1 and our Avila students, faculty & staff did an amazing job! — at Avila University."

Avila University Facebook post

February's gift of scholarship to the Sterling family on ABC's The View prompted a wealth of social media comments thanking Avila for its generosity.

"I am so proud to be a 1996 alum! Thank you Avila for your generous gift to a wonderful family! There is not a better university and loved every moment of my college experience at Avila!"

Mary Wagner Jonscher — Facebook post

"They'll receive a first-class education. I'm proud to be an Avila alum."

Judie Bunia-White — Facebook post

Coincidence or Fate?

New Spanish professor happy to be at Avila



Teresa Lorenz, Ph.D. visits the Plaza Mayor in Madrid, Spain

Teresa Lorenz, Ph.D., new assistant professor of Spanish in Avila's College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences, becomes a bit sheepish when telling the story. It's almost as if she thinks she'll come across as crazy, or no one will believe her. Yet, the facts are the facts.



In the summer of 2011, Lorenz took 27 University of Arizona students on a six-week study to Segovia, Spain. She had been to Spain before – in 2000, where she studied as an undergraduate and in 2006 while working on her Ph.D. – but had never had the opportunity to visit the city of Ávila, home to

St. Teresa of Ávila. It was a place where she'd always felt a connection. After all, though her parents denied any linkage, Teresa did share her name with the saint, she and her family are Catholic, and for some unknown reason, her parents had left the more-traditional 'h' out of her first name. She thought, on this trip, perhaps she'd be able to make that pilgrimage.

At the same time, Lorenz was feeling anxiety over her future. Rather than

stay back in Tucson, where she had just graduated from the University of Arizona, and look for a job, she had taken this trip to Spain. The job market in the U.S. was bleak, and she wasn't sure what awaited her once she returned home.

When an opportunity arose to take a weekend trip to Ávila, Lorenz decided she was going to take full advantage.

"We went on a tour to where St. Teresa of Ávila was baptized, and nervous about the job market at the time, I said a little prayer in front of her baptismal font asking to find a job."

It didn't take long upon her return to the U.S. to have her prayers answered.

"I came back in the fall of 2011, and this job posting came up," Lorenz said.

Avila University was hiring a Spanish professor. Lorenz, who's fluent in Spanish and well-versed in Portuguese and French, was looking for a place to start her professional career.

It was a perfect fit.

"I never knew much about the Midwest," she said. "But, here I am. It's different, but I'm loving my experience here. Everyone has been so helpful and nice."

Lorenz, who teaches two classes in Spanish I and one in Spanish II. She grew up in Oil City, Pa., a tiny burg on the western end of the state, between Pittsburgh and Lake Erie. She said she started learning Spanish in high school.

"My teacher in high school motivated me to learn Spanish, so I wanted to motivate others," she said.

Lorenz said she decided to go to the University of Arizona for her graduate work because it was a place where she knew she could use her Spanish all the time. That led to her appointment on the trip to Spain, to Ávila and her little prayer that, well, ended up with her at a university named for St. Teresa of Ávila.

For Lorenz, learning a foreign language goes far beyond being able to speak to people in their lands. "I think it's a great way to connect with other cultures," she said. "I feel that, often, we don't know how to do that. Along with learning a language, you also learn the culture. That's highly beneficial."

That's the part of Spanish that she wants to teach her students at Avila. 🇪🇸

Playing to the Senses

Students immerse themselves in music and art during trip to Berlin

Students in Ken Parsons', Ph.D., and Amity Bryson's, DMA, Music & Politics interdisciplinary class knew on their first night in Berlin that this wasn't going to be an ordinary trip.

Fresh off an 18-hour flight that took them through Charlotte, N.C. and Frankfurt, Germany – and, a train ride and walk carrying luggage to their hotel – Parsons and Bryson asked the 12 sleep-deprived students, majoring in everything from education to history to theatre and music, to follow them on their first adventure. After a walk down Unter den Linden, one of the main thoroughfares in the city, the students were taken to the unsicht-Bar. Only, this was no ordinary eatery. Unsicht-Bar is what is known in Germany as a “dark restaurant.” Patrons dine in pitch-black darkness and are served by the blind or visually-impaired. They have only the senses of smelling, tasting, hearing and feeling to guide their way.

“The first experience we wanted students to have used their aural abilities, relied on just what you hear,” said Parsons, chair, religious studies and assistant professor of philosophy. “In this course, we emphasized listening. The students loved the variety of things they were able to do that expanded their horizons.”

During the trip, which took place Oct. 16-23, 2012, students were formally subjected to at least four music experiences – a musical theatre performance, a 17th-century opera, a performance by a post-punk electronic duo and a women's jazz quartet. In a city known as the techno-music capital of the world, students were encouraged to venture out and attend more music events on their own.

The idea not only was to listen to the music, but experience it – fully immerse themselves in the cultural and political aspects of it.

“We'd never traveled with this course before,” said Parsons, who had traveled to Berlin with another class in 2010. “We wanted an immersive component that drove the students into the subject work like you can't in a cinder-block classroom.”

The students' activities weren't just limited to music. They visited a Holocaust memorial and a cultural exhibit called the “Story of Berlin.” Students also took in museums filled with ancient Roman and Persian art, as well as more modern museums. And, of course, there was plenty of food, both native to the country and of other ethnicities.

“The Sunday of our trip, students were left free to explore the city on their own,” Parsons said. “Part of the goal was to show students that music is political, and that it's often a completely different experience being there and being part of a communal experience than simply listening to music on your headphones.”

“But, it wasn't just a music/ political trip. It was a broad-based multi-cultural experience.”

The coursework didn't end after the students returned home. Each student was required to keep a journal of the experience, and as a class assignment, each was asked to compose an original piece of music related to the experience. Some students performed those pieces at a recital Dec. 2 in the chapel in Foyle Hall.

“The students who performed in the recital were excited, but nervous to share their original compositions with a live audience,” said Bryson, associate professor and chair of music. “Students found inspiration from a variety of experiences – from the Holocaust Memorial to live street performers. They truly brought ‘Pieces of Berlin’ back with them for the Avila community.”



“We wanted an immersive component that drove the students into the subject work like you can't in a cinder-block classroom.”

Ken Parsons, Ph.D.



"In many ways, it's an extension of the values of the Sisters of St. Joseph, in that it deals with relationships between living things and the Earth, stewardship of the Earth and its natural resources, and caring for the dear neighbor in protecting and caring for those resources important for life."



Going Green

Biology students become attuned to the environment

As sustainability and green initiatives have become hot topics in the U.S. the past several years, Avila University has taken great pride in being a leader and at the forefront of such enterprises.

Beginning with the spring 2013 semester, the University took another step toward making sure its students in the School of Science and Health will be fully up to speed on those topics as well.

Beginning this spring, Avila introduced Biology 115: Introduction to Environmental Science, a new course in the School of Science and Health's biology major.

According to assistant professor Karin Gastreich, Ph.D., offering students a course in environmental science is something that's been in the works at Avila for some time.

"In many ways, it's an extension of the values of the Sisters of St. Joseph," Gastreich said, "in that it deals with relationships between living things and the Earth, stewardship of the Earth and its natural resources, and caring for the dear neighbor in protecting and caring for those resources important for life."

Gastreich said her goal for the course was to give students tools to face any environmental challenges the world might face this next century. "We've really just started, but my sense is that the students are really interested," Gastreich said. "They want to know more about the underlying biology. As an instructor, I want to provide them with information they can use to decide the larger issues for themselves."

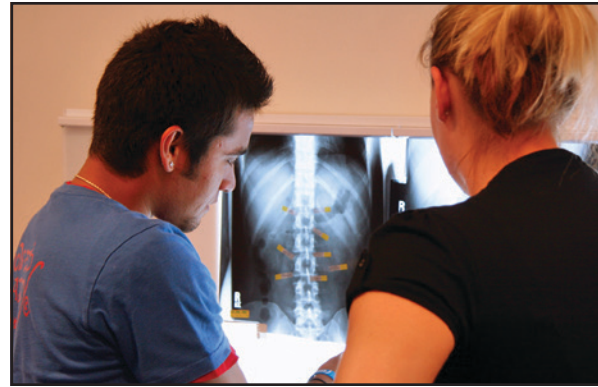
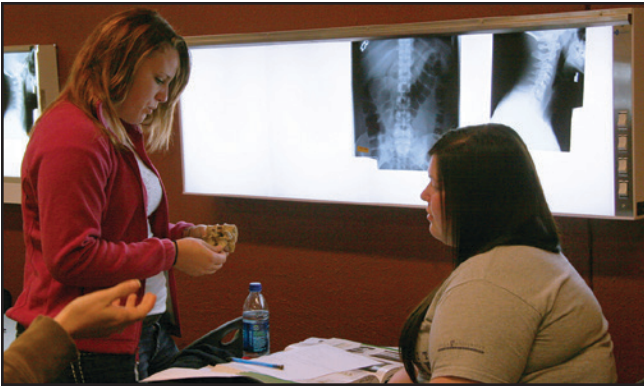
"We have new data coming in all the time. I think it's going to be important how we deal with the interpretation of that data."

Gastreich said the course covers a broad range of topics, including resource management, ecology, energy (both renewable and non-renewable), endangered species, agriculture and economics and policy. Now in her sixth year teaching at Avila, she said she's drawn heavily upon her eight years of experience running an environmental science study abroad in Costa Rica.

"My field (of expertise) is animal behavior," she said. "But, I learned a lot about ecology. I think it's just natural to be interested in the environment." 🌱



Programs Benefit from Financial Gifts



Rad Science program singled out for \$250,000 grant

Avila University was awarded a grant of \$250,000 by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), an agency of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The grant is to be used to help full-time disadvantaged students in the University's Radiologic Science major.

Avila was the only institution of higher education in Missouri or Kansas to receive this award for radiologic science and one of three to receive HRSA grants. The other two were for nursing.

HRSA's Scholarships for Disadvantaged Students program promotes diversity among health profession students and practitioners by providing scholarships to full-time students with financial need from disadvantaged backgrounds enrolled in health professions and nursing programs. About 42 percent of Avila students come from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Receiving this grant comes at an especially exciting time for Avila's School of Science and Health.

There are plans to establish a new Science and Health Complex in O'Reilly Hall that includes a new microbiology/cell biology lab, chemistry lab, instrumentation lab and a general biology lab. The project expands research space for faculty and students.

"The Science and Health Complex is an exciting venture," Sullivan, Ph.D., dean of School of Science and Health said. "It's creating new learning spaces for students and further enhancing access to the latest technology, preparing students for successful careers."

The anatomy and physiology lab in O'Reilly Hall was refurbished during Avila's recent \$13.5 million capital improvements plan that also included a new residence hall (Avila Hall), athletic pavilion, dining hall renovation and campus entry signage.

University's mission wins grant support

Avila University was selected to receive a NetVUE Program Development Grant in the amount of \$50,000, the Council of Independent Colleges announced back in November, 2012. Avila was among 33 NetVUE institutions selected in the first round of recipients of this award, meant to deepen the intellectual and theological exploration of vocation among undergraduate students. The grants were made possible by donations to the Council of Independent Colleges by Lilly Endowment Inc.

"This grant will help students explore vocation ... that is, the meaning and purpose in their lives," said Dave Armstrong, director of Campus Ministries and Mission Effectiveness. "It will help us track the development and understanding of each person's calling ... not necessarily religious, but what God is calling them to do."

There are three main ways the grant will be used. The first is to establish a program for students interested in becoming associates with the Sisters of St. Joseph. Second is to help send students to retreats at Jerusalem Farm, the volunteer community service retreat in Kansas City, Mo., sponsored by Avila University. The final project is to fund scholarships for low-income students to participate in travel courses at the University. 📖





"I'm here to grow into Avila, and I'm here to be what I'm needed to be."

Branson Brings Calling to Avila

Don't be surprised if beautiful musical notes and chords fill the air when the Rev. Keith Branson is around.

After all, music has been a big part of Branson's life for much longer than the vocation that recently brought him to Avila University – the priesthood. For more than two decades prior to coming to Avila as the University's new chaplain, Branson made his living playing organ and singing.

"I was a full-time church musician," Branson said recently from his office in Foyle Hall, just across the hall from the Orscheln Memorial Chapel. "I write music. I was an organist for church choirs, full groups, bands, orchestras."

He then grows quiet and pensive.

"I have no regrets," he said. "I felt I did good work in music. But, I just felt called to do something else."

So Branson, who has earned no fewer than five degrees of higher education, including master and doctorate degrees from the University of Kansas, left his career in music behind to join the priesthood, even though he didn't grow up Catholic. He was ordained in 2000 and serves the Society of Precious Blood, an order of priests that does apostolic work for the Catholic Church. It's one of the Church's smaller orders, with about 600-650 members worldwide.

"I don't think I could have become a priest sooner in life," he said. "I just wasn't ready."

Branson replaces the Rev. Ernie Gauthier, who served as Avila's chaplain for 10 years. Gauthier continues his ministry to prisons and persons with addictions. Dave Armstrong, Avila's director of Campus Ministry and Mission Effectiveness, learned that Branson was looking to relocate back to the Kansas City area through conversations with Jude Huntz, chancellor of the

diocese of Kansas City and St. Joseph, and Armstrong then got in contact with Fr. Branson's provincial at the Precious Blood Center in Liberty, Mo., where Branson lives.

"He asked me if I'd be interested in Avila," Branson said. "I met with Dave, we talked, and here I am."

"I've been part of campus life for decades. It seems like a natural fit."

Branson leads mass on Wednesdays and Sundays. He's available to counsel students and, basically, serve in any capacity the University needs.

Thus far, he's found Avila and its students impressive and welcoming.

"I have been impressed by the commitment and energy the Avila students have for faith and service," Branson said. "They have made me feel very welcome in my short time here and have been very open and honest sharing their values and dreams with me. Campus ministry is very special here."

"I also was very impressed by the Avila mission as expressed by President Ron's presentation of scholarships to the Sterling family of Blue Springs on *The View*. It's one thing to hold high standards and another to be willing to stand up and put them into practice."

"I'm here to help in any way I can," Branson said. "I've always believed you go where the spirit sends you and be where people need you to be."

With that in mind, Branson said the tenure of his service to Avila is open-ended.

"Every time I've tried to plan my future out, God has sent me in another direction," he said. "I'm here to grow into Avila, and I'm here to be what I'm needed to be."

And don't be surprised if he isn't playing a little music along the way. 🎵

Living the Mission

Impending nursing graduate will leave her mark in campus ministry

Brittany Rose figured out what she wanted to do with the rest of her life at an early age. A summer spent caring for an ailing great-grandmother had her wanting to become a nurse before she entered the ninth grade.

She almost was as quick in knowing where she wanted to attain her nursing degree. Her mother graduated from Avila University in the 1980s with an education degree, and Rose was well-aware of the stellar reputation of the University's School of Nursing.

"I first visited Avila my sophomore year in high school, and it was when they opened the new nursing lab," said Rose, a senior from Blue Springs, Mo. "I just remember being really excited at all that was happening there."

"I went for an overnight stay my junior year, and then my senior year, I went back for freshman orientation."

Since then, Rose has made the most of her time on the Avila campus. Not only is she a dean's list student, she has resided on campus her entire four years and has been heavily involved in

campus ministry, helping and arranging community service projects.

"When I found I could do campus ministry and receive a performance grant, I decided not to play volleyball and do that instead," she said. "I grew up in an environment where service was important. Now, I'm a co-leader of service. I've gone from helping at events, to planning events, to helping people plan events. It's been a great experience."

In fact, Rose received the S. Ellen Marie Gavin Award for outstanding work in campus ministry her sophomore year, something that's quite rare for an underclassman.

"She's the best student I've ever worked with," said Dave Armstrong, director of campus ministry and mission effectiveness at Avila. "Her leadership to the other students has been inspiring. She'll be an outstanding nurse. She cares about people. It's the perfect profession for her."

Rose will walk and accept her diploma in May and then head out into the working world, leaving behind the place she's loved as her home the last four years.

"I've had several senior moments where I look back at where I started and where I've come," she said. "It's mind-blowing. My freshman year, I was quiet and shy. My leadership abilities have grown tremendously. I have confidence in myself and my abilities to work in my career." 🙌



Theatre Students Build Set for Kauffman-Starlight

Jason Harris said one of his favorite words always has been, “opportunity.”

Harris, associate professor and director for technical theatre and design in Avila University's College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences, and 10 of his former and current students received such an opportunity when they were asked to construct the set used for “The Musical Adventures of Flat Stanley,” a children's play co-produced by the Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts and Starlight Theatre that ran from Jan. 16-27 at the Kauffman Center. Construction took place on the stage at Goppert Theatre.

It's just one of the many ways Avila University provides its students with experiential learning environments.

Harris said the opportunity came about because of a professional association and because of work some Avila students performed last spring. According to Harris, Kent Andel, the production manager of “Flat Stanley,” contacted him through a former student, Sean Glass '12, who was working as lighting designer for the Kauffman production.

Glass worked with a group of Avila students during the spring of 2012 in lighting a Starlight production at Kauffman. Andel and Glass liked the work ethic of the students and decided to offer them another opportunity.

Harris said he also worked last summer with a crew of Avila students on sets at Theatre in the Park in Shawnee Mission Park. He used basically the same crew for this assignment.

“These are great opportunities for students to get some professional work,” said Harris, who has been an instructor at Avila 10 years. “We had about six to seven carpenters and four painters working.”

Apparently, the students did a good job. Harris was tabbed by the Kauffman/Starlight folks to design the set for an upcoming show this

spring. One of Harris' students, Adam Robertson, is serving as technical director for the show, and there again will be a student crew building the set.

Charlene Gould, Ph.D., dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences, said that it's providing students opportunities like this that makes Harris an invaluable asset to the theatre department.

“Jason Harris consistently inspires students by offering them paid opportunities in the community to utilize their professional training and skills,” Gould said. “Working with Starlight at the Kauffman Center showcases our talent and training in an incredible space, and we are thrilled to provide this experience for our students.”

The students gained a valuable lesson in working on a tight deadline. They had just one week to complete construction of the set before it had to be installed at the Kauffman Center.

“It was basically a 40-hour work week,” Harris said. “We started on a Monday, worked on it every day that week, and we worked on it all day Saturday before installing it Sunday morning.”

“The nice thing for the students on this show is that, when working on an extremely tight deadline, it gives them a more intense learning experience.”

That the producers of “The Musical Adventures of Flat Stanley” selected Avila students to build their set said a lot about the theatre department here, Harris said.

“I know that it means that, when the students were working last year, they had a strong work ethic,” he said. “The program is here for them to make what they want to make it.”

“Students come here because they know they can get as much hands-on experience as they want. That's how they learn. It's how they get better.”

It all comes back to Harris' favorite word, he said.

“For students here, it's all about opportunity.”





Kennedy Center Honors Senior

Adam Robertson said he often gets teased for having such a modest, laid-back demeanor. It's not easy to get a rise in temperament out of the young man.

Even when Robertson recently received an honor from the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, the 42-year-old world-renown institution for performing arts that bears the name of this nation's 35th president, he didn't appear overtly excited.

But he knows it's a big deal.

Robertson, a senior about to graduate with a degree in theatre design technology from Avila University's College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences, recently placed second in National Lighting Design at The Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival, Region V, Festival XLV, held in Lincoln, Neb. He received the honor for his work on lighting the set for the University's production last fall of Agatha Christie's *The Mousetrap*.

"Yeah, it was a pretty neat deal," Robertson said. "It's definitely the biggest thing to happen to me during my time working in theatre."

Robertson didn't originally go to college to study theatre. He started at Pittsburg State University, where he studied

engineering. But, after a couple years there, he decided that wasn't for him.

"Lights and sound have always been interests of mine," he said. "I've always been a tech guy."

Robertson's mother, Pattie, is the long-time office manager of Avila's College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences. Because of that, he had grown up knowing the dean, Charlene Gould, Ph.D. Those associations, he said, led to transferring to Avila's theatre department.

"Dr. Gould and my mom were in my ear," he said. "It was nice to walk into a place so warm. It was very enticing."

Robertson is finishing up his fourth year at Avila. Over the last four years, he said he not only has worked on Avila theatre productions, but has gained valuable experience working on outside projects as well. He worked on Starlight Theatre's production of *Aladdin*. He's worked on Christmas shows at the Church of the Resurrection.

At Avila, he's served as prop master on *Death Trap*. He designed the sound for Chicago. He's worked a wide variety

of tasks on several productions through the years.

"I'm a Jack of all trades," he said. "I bounce around and do what needs to be done."

But it will always be Avila's production of *The Mousetrap* last fall that will stand out.

Robertson said he had 15 minutes in a 4-by-4-foot space to present his design to a judge.

"I threw a bunch of pictures up," he said. "I gave him a couple blurbs on the show. I showed him the grid where we hung lights."

He also showed the judge a video on his cell phone of the "white fire" he'd created for the fireplace on the set.

"The judge loved that," Robertson said. "The judge was a previous lighting designer."

It ended in an honor Robertson hopes will catapult him into his career. He graduates in May and said he already has a job lined up working at Theatre in the Park in Shawnee Mission Park.

"After that, it's open," he said.

As Robertson steps out of the university realm and into the real working world, it most certainly will help having a Kennedy Center honor on his resume.

"I can't imagine it won't help," he said with typical nonchalance. 🎭

Star Student has Involved Herself in All Aspects of Campus Life

Lisa York '12 had no idea what to expect from college life when she enrolled at Avila University in the fall of 2009. So, the recent Raymore-Peculiar (Mo.) High School graduate just decided she'd better cover all her bases and try a bit of everything.

What came out of that philosophy is that, over the last four years, the energetic and effervescent York has become one of Avila's most involved students.

Start with Campus Ministry. Beginning with her freshman year, one of the first activities York jumped into was working with Campus Ministry and especially Habitat for Humanity, building homes for needy families. She also jumped into the role of work-study under Avila's director of student life, Jason Baldwin, and has helped organize campus activities

for the last three-and-a-half years. York names her greatest accomplishment as bringing Relay For Life, the American Cancer Society-sponsored fundraiser, to Avila's campus.

"Lisa is an outstanding student-athlete that embodies the spirit of Avila," Baldwin said. "She is reliable, hard-working, caring and a positive role model."

Then, there's soccer, the main reason York came to Avila in the first place. She established herself right away as a capable midfielder, starting 14 of 18

games her freshman season.

As a junior she started 18 of 20 games, helping the Eagles to an impressive 12-3-5 record. York served as team captain the past three years, a rarity for a single player to hold that designation for such a long period.

Yet, it was another experience with the soccer team – one that, of course, involved service – that York enjoyed most.

"Going to the Dominican Republic was the greatest thing we did," she said. "We went to a village and played with children and local soccer teams. Most of the kids didn't even have soccer balls. We left all of our equipment with them."

Additionally, York has been an honor student her entire time at Avila and recently received her undergraduate degree with a double major in marketing and business management. She is attending Avila as a graduate student in the business administration program.

"All of the opportunities you have at Avila give you resources to go on in life," York said. "Professors not only know what they're talking about, but they care. From step A to B, Avila is with you. They want to see you succeed, so they give you the resources you need to succeed."

Last fall, York was crowned homecoming queen, largely for her incredible involvements with the University.

Being involved is what Lisa York has done at Avila for nearly the last four years. She will undoubtedly continue to use the resources the University has provided her and serve the community around her in her graduate career with Avila as well.

The University is the better for it. 🏆





Serving for Education

Veteran achieves degree through Yellow Ribbon program

When Amber “Nikky” Maggio graduated high school, she knew two things – she wanted to go to college, and she wanted out of her hometown of El Paso, Texas.

There was just one problem. She didn’t have any money. But, instead of throwing up her hands, giving up and locking herself into some random menial job in the Texas high desert, Maggio sought a solution.

She found that solution in the U.S. Air Force and, after that, Avila University.

“The biggest selling point of the military is it pays for your education,” she said. “I wanted to travel. And, after 9/11, I felt it would be a good thing to help protect the country.”

Maggio enlisted in the Air Force in 2002 and for the next 5 ½ years she served as a munitions loader on F-16 fighter planes. She was stationed in Misawa, Japan and served four months in Iraq, also serving brief, temporary deployments in Malaysia and Las Vegas.

“I really enjoyed my time in the military,” she said. “It was very good for me.”

But 5 ½ years was enough, and Maggio was left with where she was going to continue her life ... and not in El Paso. While in the Air Force, she met and married her husband, Anthony, and the two soon had a daughter, Layla. Anthony was originally from Grain Valley, Mo., just east of Kansas City, and wanted to move closer to family.

Nikky eventually found a new home in the Kansas City area ... and, at Avila.

It was Anthony who first enrolled in Avila’s business program.

“He had heard about Avila through a friend,” Nikky said. “He knew Avila was a well-known university in the area.”

Maggio said she felt intimidated about returning to school at first, but quickly found solace at Avila, where she enrolled in the radiological science program.

“The class sizes were small, and there was a lot of faculty/student interaction,” she said. “I would hate a big school and big classes. I need that one-on-one interaction.”

The Post 9/11 GI Bill would cover only a portion of Maggio’s education expenses, so she applied to the Yellow Ribbon Program, which covers the rest. The Yellow Ribbon Program is a provision of the Post 9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2008. As an education partner, Avila, in conjunction with the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs, funds tuition expenses for qualified veterans, their spouses and children typically at 100 percent.

“I would not be able to afford it without Yellow Ribbon,” she said. “I love it here. It’s user-friendly, but at the same time, I’m getting a really good degree.”

Maggio said she’s on track to graduate in May 2014. 📄



Avila University Welcomes Veterans

As an education partner in the Yellow Ribbon program, a provision of the Post 9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Act, Avila works with the Veterans Administration to fund tuition expenses for veterans and their families up to 100 percent.

That means qualified veterans or their family members can attend Avila for free!

Learn more at www.avila.edu/welcomeveterans

AVILA UNIVERSITY
Opening Doors

11901 Wornall Road, Kansas City, Missouri
816.501.2400

veterans@avila.edu

Sponsored by the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet



Avila University's 37th Annual Steer Dinner and Auction

It was a record-breaking night for Avila University at the 37th Annual Steer Dinner and Auction held on February 16 at the Kansas City Downtown Marriott - Muehlebach Tower. Under the Steer leadership of John and Nancy McCarthy, honorary chairs, and Lauren McCarthy '07 and Ana Valdez '96, event co-chairs, this year's gala raised \$614,402 for student scholarships. New features to Steer included a Recent Alumni Ticket option which increased young alumni attendance and an After Party where guests danced the night away to the Saucy Jack Band and had fun in the Steer Photo Booth. Kelly Jones from KCTV 5, event emcee, and The Nigro Brothers, event auctioneers, kept the program fun and the 600+ attendees entertained. View more Steer photos at www.avila.edu/steer.



Kelly Jones, KCTV 5, event emcee



Lauren McCarthy '07 and Ana Valdez '96, event co-chairs



Sister Marie Joan Harris, CSJ, and Larry Hayes '11, '12



John McCarthy, honorary chair, Suzanne Slepitz, Avila University first lady, Nancy McCarthy, honorary chair, Ana Valdez '96, event co-chair



Nancy McCarthy, honorary chair, Erin Penney '13, Linda Tharpe

Photos: Ryan Yoakum



Ann Ojile, Christine Ojile '82 (Board of Trustees member), Doug Poyser, Elizabeth Stewart



John and Nancy McCarthy, honorary chairs, and Lauren McCarthy '07, event co-chair, and (out of camera range) Ana Valdez '96, event co-chair, announce that \$614,402 has been raised for student scholarships at Steer Dinner.



John McCarthy, honorary chair, Derrick Lewis '13, Rozena Lewis



Ron Slepitz, PhD, CSJA, Avila University president



Sue Fahey and Susan Straub



Avila student Raquel Roman sings the Steer Dinner blessing, sung for many years by Sister Olive Louise Dallavis.



Steve (Board of Trustees member) and Anne Dunn '75



Front row: Mason Hansen, Lindsey Neibling, Kara Palan. Back row: Grant Fay, Mark Neibling, Jacob Palan.



Ryan and Erika McCarthy enjoy the Silent Auction.



Ken (Board of Trustees member) and Marilyn Hager



Mary Ellen Clark '73, Honorary co-chair for Homecoming 2013 and Jeanne Hamilton Olofson '92, '94, '11 (Board of Trustees member).

Avila Homecoming EAGLE DAYS 2012

ALL TRAILS LEAD TO AVILA

Reunion Classes: '47, '52, '62, '72, '82, '87, '92, '02, '07

With more than 1500 people returning to campus for events and activities, Homecoming 2012 was a huge success! Alumni and Friends from more than 6 states, including Oregon, Nevada, Georgia and Florida, came back to Avila's beautiful campus to reconnect with friends, visit with past professors and take in all the wonderful changes that are happening on campus. New events this year included class reunions on Friday night; a meet and greet reception held before the Heritage Mass on Friday morning; a trip to Jerusalem Farm – a new volunteer mission site in the northeast corridor of Kansas City; and a former faculty and staff luncheon. Dinner theatre was, as always, a huge hit with friends, alums and students alike and the football team (after 6 hours of playtime spread over two days) won the homecoming game against Culver-Stockton 67 to 29!

Heritage Mass and Luncheon



Kathy Phillips '62, Kathryn Forge '67 and Laura Corley '62 attend the Heritage Mass and enjoy reconnecting with each other.



Heritage Society member Marybeth Swartz O'Malley '47 with President Ron Slepitz.



Members of the class of 1958, including Heritage Society member Mary Jo Bowman.

Class Reunions



The class of 1972 enjoyed catching up with old friends during their class reunion.



The nursing class from 2002 enjoyed catching up with each other in the nursing school's simulation lab.



Terri St. John '82, Kelley McQuillian-Ebel '82, and Christine Ojile '82 have fun reminiscing at their 1982 Class Reunion.

Eagle Madness



Students work on the entries for the annual can food sculpture contest that benefits Harvesters Food Bank.

Football Game and Tailgate Party



Molly Groebe '02 enjoys the Alumni Association tailgate with her daughter, Kaitlin, and husband, Matt.



2012 Homecoming King, Tyler Cardwell, and 2012 Homecoming Queen, Lisa York, are presented their crowns by last year's king and queen, Paul Hillbrand and Emilee Bickleman, and pose with President Ron Slepitz.



The nationally ranked Avila Dance and Cheer teams perform during Eagle Madness helping the crowd get ready for the Homecoming Game.

Alumni Awards Luncheon



Three generations of Avila students: Rose Marie (Carrollo) Falco '47, her grandchild Rozzanna Zaccagnini '91, and current student and great-granddaughter Alexzis Thomson.

Alumni Reception



Elaine Strobe '72, Germaine Gaines '72 and Marian Huhman '72 reconnect at the Alumni Reception.



Lynn Sheek and Kim (Wilcox) Sheek '82



2012 Alumni Award Recipients

Front Row: Sherri (Werthman) Porter '97, Chelsea Howlett-Weideman '09, Sherri Enright '12, Jeanne Rau-Flattery '92, Lynn (Lehman) Barrett '86, Keith Richcreek '05, '08
Back Row: Cathy (Fick) McDaniel '72, Michelle Kerwin '72, Greg Smith '06, '10, Bryan Salsgiver '10, Denise (Briscoe) Rangel '98, Rose Marie (Carrollo) Falco '47



AVILA ALUMNI BASKETBALL SCRIMMAGE

On February 9, 2013, Avila Alumni gathered at Mabey Fieldhouse to reconnect with each other and prove they still had skills on the court at the annual Alumni Basketball Game. The players enjoyed a reception and a friendly game

against one another. Want to prove you still have what it takes to make it down the court? Join us next year at the alumni game in October! Watch avila.edu/alumni for more information.



AVILA ON THE ROAD!

Tampa, Florida

Avila Alumni in the Tampa, FL area gathered for a reception with President Ron Slepitzka on January 6, 2013. Pictured are: (standing) Bob French '79, President Ron Slepitzka, Ben Rook '77, Alex Guhr '05 (seated) Bonnie French, VP of Advancement Angie Heer.



Naples, Florida

Rosemary Schocklee-Fusaro '63 hosted a reception in the Naples area on January 9, 2013. Pictured are (standing) John Hodes, President Ron Slepitzka, Board of Trustees Chair Bob Hunter, Senior Development Director Jessie Fuller-Clark (seated) Suzanne Hodes, Wendy Wahlstedt '86, Kristin Schocklee, Rosemary Schocklee-Fusaro '63.



Honor a Classmate!

We're proud of our alumni and want to recognize those in our community who are incorporating the Avila mission into the careers and daily lives. If you know of an alumnus who exemplifies the Avila spirit, nominate them for an alumni award! You can find a listing of the awards as well as the nomination form on line at avila.edu/alumni. Nominations are due by May 1st.

Alumni Board

Are you interested in serving your alma mater by joining the alumni board? Please contact the alumni office at alumni@avila.edu or 816-501-3780 for more information.

April 26-27, 2013 *SOLD OUT!*****
Alumni Weekend
at Great Wolf Lodge

May 9, 2013

Alumni at Last Bash

Join Avila Alumni Association Board members and other recent alumni as they welcome Avila's newest alumni, the class of 2013, into the Alumni Association. Check the alumni page on the website for details and to register.

May 16, 2013

Avila Donor BBQ

Please join us as we say "Thank You!" to our generous donors at our annual Donor BBQ! Come enjoy delicious BBQ and mingle with fellow Avila Alumni and Friends.

RSVP to Vanessa.Herring@avila.edu by May 10.

June 8, 2013

Avila Alumni Day at Worlds of Fun

Bring your family and join other Avila Alumni at Worlds of Fun! This year, the discounted ticket price includes passes to both Worlds of Fun and Oceans of Fun. Your discounted ticket gets you access to the park and includes admission into the Avila Alumni Picnic Lunch. Watch the website for ticket information as tickets sell fast.

July 12, 2013

Avila Alumni Night at the T-Bones

Join the alumni association for a night of baseball fun and BBQ with the T-Bones! Tickets are \$24 and include your game ticket and admission to the pregame tailgate in centerfield and two drink tickets. Register online at www.avila.edu/alumni or contact the Alumni Office at 816-501-3780 for more details.

August 1, 2013

Class Alumni Partner Homecoming Kickoff Dinner

Class Alumni Partners (CAPs) will gather to kick off another Homecoming season. Watch your mailbox for more information.

Find out about the latest Alumni news and activities by following us on social media. The Alumni Association is on Facebook and LinkedIn and we want to hear from you. You can also sign up for alumni newsletters and special emails at avila.edu/alumni.

Avila Goes Hollywood

Homecoming 2013 October 7-13

Homecoming is a time to connect with friends and reminisce about days gone by. Head back to Avila's beautiful campus to enjoy class reunions, Dinner Theatre, homecoming tailgate party and football game, Heritage Society Mass and Luncheon and the Alumni Association Awards.

Check the website for additional information, email alumni@avila.edu or call 816-501-3780.

Thursday, October 10

- 65th Anniversary School of Nursing Celebration

Friday, October 11

- Heritage Society Mass and Luncheon
- Honored Class Reunions

Saturday, October 12

- Tailgate and Football Game
- Alumni Reception
- Dinner Theatre

Sunday, October 13

- Alumni Mass
- Alumni Association Awards Luncheon

SAVE THE DATE

Celebrating 65 Years of Excellence

October 10, 2013 • 12-1 p.m.

Please join us to celebrate the 65 Years of Nursing Excellence during a luncheon honoring the Nursing School's 65th Anniversary. Attendees will enjoy lunch and a keynote presentation by **Caryl Goodyear Bruch**, Director of Professional Resources and Leadership Development at Children's Mercy Hospitals and Clinics. To register for the event, please visit www.avila.edu/alumni or email Vanessa.Herring@avila.edu.

Alumni Cruise • Oct. 11-18, 2013



Pearls of the Mediterranean Oceania Cruises – Monte Carlo to Rome

Please visit avila.edu/alumnitravel or email alumni@avila.edu for more information.

'47 Rose Marie (Carrollo) Falco received the 2012 Honored Class Alumni Award at the Alumni Association Awards Luncheon during Homecoming Weekend. She earned her degree in sociology and spent 34 years of her life serving as a first grade teacher in the Hickman Mills School District. Rose Marie's great-granddaughter, Alexzis Thomson, is a sophomore at Avila University.

'55 Marilyn (Carrigan) Fennesy enjoys spending her free time serving as a volunteer with Kansas City Hospice. Her volunteer experience there has been a joy and she encourages other alumni to join her as a volunteer to give back.

'58 Virginia (Kopp) Coppinger has been married to her high school sweetheart for 53 years. She has been blessed with 16 grandchildren and is trying to keep up with their activities in the Kansas City metro area. Virginia loves serving on the Avila Board and would love to hear from any or all of her 1958 classmates.

'57 Sallie (Rielley) Frye lives far from Avila, but she still holds very close her memories of her days at The College of St. Teresa. She stays very busy with her family-owned business, Frye Electronics, located in Tigard, Oregon. The company builds instruments to test hearing aids and hearing. When not working, she enjoys spending time with her family – especially her four grandchildren. Sallie is planning a trip back to Kansas City next summer and hopes to see many of her college classmates then.

'61 Susan C. Bionda retired in May, 2012 after teaching 27 years and raising three children. She now spends her free time traveling and keeping up with her seven grandchildren.

'61 Bonnie (Hudson) Gunckel was honored as a 50-year member of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics at a special ceremony held in Philadelphia October 6, 2012. For 24 years, Bonnie owned her own business and employed 14 other registered dietitians. Prior to retiring, Bonnie sold her business and worked for Hospice for several years. She looks forward to continuing her service as a dietitian by volunteering as historian of the Indiana Dietetic Association and serving as editor for the National Dietetics in Health Care Communities newsletter. "Thank you Avila for making it possible to fulfill my dream of becoming a dietitian," she said.

'64 Kathryn (Heine) McIntyre enjoys traveling to see her four great-grandchildren in the Manhattan, Kan. area. She also has visited 37 countries, the most recent being a trip to Cuba.

'66 Robbie (Rose) Small has been married since 1966 and has three grown children and seven grandchildren rang-

ing in ages from 4-14. Her family is a big part of her life and even though her father passed in 1997, her mother is still a sharp 92-year-old living in Endewood. Robbie is the founder and chairman of the U.S. Bank Great Midwest Balloon Fest; the past president of the Symphony Women's Association; co-founder and past president of the American Stroke Foundation; and past vice president of the Jewish Community Center Board of Directors. Robbie and her husband love to travel and have enjoyed trips to Europe, China, Israel, Canada and the U.S. Robbie is so proud of Avila for growing into a respected and dynamic force for higher education in the Kansas City area and beyond.

'67 Julie C. (Walters) McManus and her husband, Jim, celebrated 40 years of wedded bliss in February 2013. They met while Julie was at Avila and Jim was at Rockhurst. They often joke that they owe their marriage to President Lyndon Johnson and his war on poverty because Kansas City was chosen as a site for Upward Bound, a national program which brought talented high school students from low-income families to college campuses to experience a variety of academic and cultural opportunities. Julie and Jim were part of the first team of Upward Bound counselors who initiated the pilot program. They have been blessed with five children and two grandchildren, with another on the way.

'71 Barbara (Walsh) Bouchey is celebrating her 13th year of retirement this year. She and her husband downsized and moved to a condominium community in downtown St. Louis. They have become very involved in St. Louis sports and their condo community. They travel frequently, including yearly trips to Ireland to visit Barbara's family. Barbara's hobby is genealogy, specifically focusing on her Walsh line from Skibbereen, County Cork, Ireland. This year, she and her husband had the great gift of spending the entire month of February in Hawaii.

'71 Michael Shirley has the infamous distinction of being the very first male student recruited by Avila College. Michael began his career in the executive search business in 1980 and, by 1990, started his own company, Michael Shirley & Associates. He sold the business in 2010 but in the meantime co-founded Catholic Business Network in 2009, which has grown to more than 400 members. Michael has a daughter, Mariah, who will be a senior at Blue Valley North next year and a son, Ray, who is attending Creighton University.

'72 Michele Kerwin received the 2012 Honored Class Award at the Alumni Association Awards Luncheon held during Homecoming weekend. Michele earned

her degree in elementary education and worked in the field for 11 years before making the move to the corporate arena. For 28 years, she has been with Sprint Corporation and is a manager in customer care. At 45, Michele decided she wanted a family and adopted her daughter from China. Mari, Michele's daughter, is a student at St. Louis University.



'72 Elaine Strope, Ph.D., and her husband James Conti, Ph.D., of Dynatek Labs, were visited by S. Marie Joan Harris, Ph.D., Provost & Vice-President for Academic Affairs, at their business in Galena, Mo. in February. Elaine came back to campus for Homecoming 2012 and reconnected with many classmates. Elaine is the president/co-owner of Dynatek and is responsible for overall administration of high tech small business focused on testing services for implantable cardiovascular medical products, manufacture of testing instruments, and manufacture of mock silicone vessels.

'72 Ann (Ott) Ventrillo and her husband, Bob, have been married 43 years. She has been with Carondelet Home Health for 25 years and is at St. Joseph Medical Center in Kansas City, Mo. as a clinical quality specialist.

'73 Mary Ellen (Fischer) Clark is serving as Avila's Honorary Co-Chair for the 2013 Homecoming Weekend, which is Oct. 11-13, 2013. She is excited to welcome back all Avila alumni to campus for the Homecoming activities - especially her 1973 classmates for their 40-year reunion. Mary Ellen is senior vice president for the Midwest Region for Jeffrey Byrne & Associates. She and husband Dan were delighted to welcome a fourth grandchild in October.

'74 John Groff, Ph.D., received the 2012 School of Science & Health Alumni Award at the Alumni Association Awards Luncheon held during Homecoming weekend. John earned his chemistry degree in 1974 and his Ph.D. after moving to Iowa City, Iowa with his wife **Mary (Moriarty)**, a graduate of the class of 1975. Mary received her master's in 1979 and gave birth to their daughter that same year.

'75 Sharon Jacobs spends her free time working on needlepoint activities. She is working on a wall hanging with a rose garden theme.

'76 David D. Kerr was a guest lecturer at Avila in April, 2012. He shared his business expertise and insights on strategic planning and policy making in both the private and public sectors with Avila business majors. Kerr, who recently retired, had an exciting business career which included president of AT&T Kansas, secretary of the Kansas Department of Commerce, and director of the Missouri Department of Economic Development.

'79 Mary Catherine (Immegart) Heimbarger has been open to various careers in life. After 22 years as the "go-to" person in her husband's medical practice, she pursued studies in theology and divinity at Aquinas Institute in St. Louis. Today, she stays busy with individual and group spiritual direction, teaching short courses in prayer, scripture, and adult faith formation, and she recently became the spiritual guide for a group of oblates. However, Mary Catherine has another fascinating side - she directs client relations and channel marketing as a wealth strategist for The Sensible Group in Columbia, Mo. Mary Catherine believes that we are called to be good stewards of all our gifts and our financial gifts are part of the picture. In addition, Mary Catherine recently agreed to serve as a member of Avila's Centennial Campaign Steering Committee. "Everything in life is relational and I remain grateful to Avila for fostering my faith and my love of teaching and music," she said.

'79 Susan M. (Hagerman) King, Ph.D., is vice president for Information Services and vice provost for Avila University. When not working for her alma mater, she enjoys serving her community as an emergency response team (CERT) volunteer and as a volunteer with Habitat for Humanity, both through the Church of the Resurrection. Sue is the proud parent of a 26-year-old daughter and 25-year-old son.

'80 Reed Alberg is director of national sales and support for RAZ Mobile, an Overland Park, Kan.-based startup that helps nonprofit organizations engage younger supporters using mobile technology to raise awareness with a full-featured, customized mobile website that is ready to publish within minutes.

'82 Mary Beth (Eilermann) Huffman is a project manager for McCarthy Building Companies in St. Louis. She and her husband of 20 years enjoy traveling, spending time at their lake house and spending time with friends and family.

'83 Stacie Bone works as Remote Coder III at Truman Medical Center in Kansas City, Mo. She still plays golf in the Monday

night league at Minor Park and would love to have other alumni join her.

'83 Leslie A. (Wellington) Minjarez is at Carondelet St. Joseph's Hospital in Tucson, Ariz., serving as director of patient care services support and has been an employee of Carondelet for 12 years. She is also an adjunct faculty member at Grand Canyon University teaching in its RN to BSN and BSN to MSN programs.

'84 Ibraheem Badejo, Ph.D. recently returned to campus to visit with S. Marie Joan Harris, Ph.D., provost & vice-president for academic affairs, and Larry Sullivan, Ph.D., dean, School of Science & Health. Ibraheem says, "I am a product of your love for teaching and care of people. Today, I am blessed to have been awarded 26 U.S. patents, over 100 international patents and am leading the innovation efforts of our business unit within Johnson & Johnson because of your love for me in the early years of my education. Remember, you suggested, I should consider going for a Ph. D. even though I was only interested in getting a master's degree and going to the business world to make money. I thank you for the advice you gave me."

'85 Kevin Durnell is from Lee's Summit, Mo. and initially attended Baylor University. He returned home and became a Kansas City police officer while completing his bachelor of arts degree at Avila University. The courses fit his schedule and he lived near the University so it was very convenient. After graduating from Avila, he moved to Washington, D.C. where he worked for the U.S. Department of State in various positions in the U.S. and abroad. He has been employed by SAIC (Science Applications International Corporation) for the past seven years. Kevin is married to Laura and they have two boys.

'85, '89 Howard Schwantes and his wife, Sharon (retired Avila staff), of Kansas City, Mo., while on vacation recently in Hawaii, coincidentally met a former Avila graduate, **Betty Trihey, '73**, at a Friday fish fry at St. Anthony of Padua Catholic Church in Kailua. Betty and her family have been residents of Honolulu for more than 35 years.

'86 Lynn Lehman Barrett received the 2012 School of Nursing Alumni Award at the Alumni Association Awards Luncheon during Homecoming weekend. Lynn earned her bachelor of science in nursing in 1986 from Avila and her master's in nursing in 1994 from UMKC. Lynn currently holds the position of chief nursing officer at Centerpoint Medical Center. She has also been awarded the UMKC School of Nursing Alumni Service Award and serves as a board member to both the UMKC School of Nursing and the Graceland School of Nursing.

'87 Beth (Van Horn) Rice received the 2012 College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences Alumni Award at the Alumni Association Awards Luncheon during Homecoming weekend. Beth earned bachelor's degrees in both theatre/acting and psychology in 1987. She holds the position of senior client manager/associate vice president of operations for Propylon Incorporated. Beth was also the recipient of the Cerner Best Innovation Award in 1998. Beth is the owner of top-producing Australian Shepherd and Newfoundland dogs.

'88, '92 Denise Cunningham is owner of Wheatland Productions, Inc. The company celebrates 10 years in business this July. Wheatland is a full service audio and video production company in addition to providing media buying services.

'89 Sandra (Wayne) Campbell retired from the Federal Aviation Administration in March 2012. She had worked for the federal government since 1970. She was manager of the Technical and Administrative Support Staff with Small Airplane Directorate of the FAA Aircraft Certification Service. In May 2012, Sandra graduated from Unity Urban Ministerial School and is on track for ordination on May 3, 2013. She is an adjunct professor with Webster University's school of business and technology in Kansas City, Mo. She and her husband, Phil, have two grown children and four grandchildren.



'92 Jeanne Rau-Flattery received the 2012 Outstanding Alumnus Award at the Alumni Association Awards Luncheon during Homecoming weekend. Jeanne graduated from Avila in 1992 with a bachelor's degree in finance and is the owner of Millennium International.

'92 Guietta (Busch) Payne is in case management at the Kansas University Medical Center.

'95 Dyanne Bean works in Corporate Marketing for Emery Sapp & Sons. She is passionate about her five-year-old granddaughter, who lives in town. She also enjoys travel and has recently explored China, Italy, Turkey, Greece, Israel and Costa Rica.

'96 **Ana Valdez** recently made Avila University history through her volunteer leadership as the Steer Dinner and Auction co-chair with **Lauren McCarthy '07**. Ana, who is the director of operations-Corporate Academy at Truman Medical Centers, and Lauren raised \$614,402 for the Avila University Scholarship Fund - a record amount in the 37 year history of the event. In conjunction with her Steer leadership, Ana created the Maria Magdalena Scholarship Fund to help Hispanic students realize their full potential.

'97 **Perri LaTerza** is the Career and Technical Education Department chair at Blue Valley Southwest High School. She serves on the Building Leadership Team and as representative on several district committees. Perri also works closely with the Kansas Department of Education on the Information Technology Career Pathways programs for the state and is a board member of the Computer Science Teachers Association of Kansas. Her daughter is at the Avila School of Nursing and son is at the U.S. Naval Academy.

'97 **Sheri (Werthman) Porter** received the 2012 School of Visual & Communication Arts Alumni Award at the Alumni Association Awards Luncheon during Homecoming weekend. Sheri earned her bachelor of arts, magna cum laude, in communication/writing and is the senior online editor for the American Academy of Family Physicians' News Now. Sheri has also been awarded the Avila Dallavis Outstanding Leadership in Communications Award (1998) and was honored as a Fellow of the Casey Journalism Center at the University of Maryland (1999).

'98 **Denise (Gaynor) Rangel**, Ed.D. received the 2012 Graduate Alumni Award at the Alumni Association Awards Luncheon during Homecoming weekend. Denise is the principal at the Belton Freshman Center and received her doctor of education, educational leadership in 2009.

'99 **Isaiah Hultman** is the vice president for the Pinnacle Division of Glazer's Distributors of Missouri. Isaiah lent his help this year for Avila's Steer Dinner and Auction by providing wine for the event. He and his wife Shannah live in St. Louis. They have three children: Paige, 13, Hailey, 10, and Brady, 8, who keep them very busy.

'03 **Jeremy Lillig** is in development writing a new multi-media performance piece set to debut in June, 2014 by the Simon Carrington Chamber Singers. The piece, entitled *Theatres of War*, is in conjunction with the WWI Museum's activities commemorating the 100th anniversary of WWI. Lillig will collaborate with Dotty Hamilton, Ph.D., dean of Avila's School of Visual and Communication Arts and chair of communication, on incorporating aspects of film into the production from historic footage to artistic interpretation.



'03 **Jamie (Cox) Young** and her husband, Andy, welcomed their son, Quinn Patrick Young, Aug. 22, 2012. Quinn was born at 7:51 a.m. and was 7 pounds, 4 ounces and 19 inches. He joins big sister Lucy (age 2) and is a beautiful and joyous addition to their family.

'03 **Ivori (Johnson) Smith** works for the Kansas City Art Institute as a financial aid coordinator. Ivori and her husband have two children - Ray III, 7, and Ivori II, 5. When Ivori isn't working or spending time with family, she is preparing to run her first 5K.

'04, '08 **Linda Rush** lives in Derby, Kan. and works for the federal government.



'05, '08 **Rebecca (Higinbothom) Henry** and her husband, Josh, welcomed their first child, Gracelyn Marie Henry, Dec. 1, 2012. Gracie was 7 pounds, 10 ounces. Rebecca works in information technology compliance and risk management for Sprint Nextel.

'05, '08 **Keith Richcreek** received the 2012 Avila Advantage Alumni Award at the Alumni Association Awards Luncheon during Homecoming Weekend. Keith is manager of technical services for Lafayette Regional Health Center and serves as a long-time Avila Alumni Board member, including holding the position of president.

'06, '10 **Greg Smith**, Kansas State senator, received the 2012 Alumni Achievement Award at the Alumni Association Awards Luncheon during Homecoming Weekend. He also won re-election to his state senate seat in November and is serving his second term.

'07 **Lauren McCarthy** recently made Avila University history through her volunteer leadership as the Steer Dinner and Auction co-chair with **Ana Valdez '96**. Lauren, who is the director of public relations for McCarthy Auto Group, and Ana raised \$614,402 for the Avila University Scholarship Fund - a record amount in the 37 year history of the event. Lauren was also the recipient of the 2012 Alumni Service Award at the Alumni Association Awards Luncheon during Homecoming weekend.



'07 **Tiffany (Swan) Poterbin** and her husband, **Brian '07**, welcomed the arrival of their daughter, Cadence Jeanné Poterbin, April 17, 2012. Brian works for Enterprise Fleet Management and Tiffany graduated from Cleveland Chiropractic College in April and is staying at home with their new baby.

'07 **Brian Poterbin** was recently elected to serve on the Avila Alumni Association Board. Brian works for Enterprise Fleet Management in business-to-business sales.

'08 **Amanda Campos-Kies** received the 2012 Alumni Service Award at the Alumni Association Awards Luncheon during Homecoming weekend.

'08 **Shawn (Bradley) Lang** is manager of postal relations at DST Mailing Services. She recently traveled to San Francisco where she was a conference presenter at the National Postal Forum. Shawn is looking forward to the arrival of her grandson, Karter, this spring and becoming a published author.



'08 Michaela (Hand) Soyland married Jason Soyland April 14, 2012. After honeymooning in Playa del Carmen, Mexico, they purchased their first home in the Waldo area in Kansas City in July, and Michaela is currently working at Cerner Corporation as a senior documentation developer. Her husband also works at Cerner Corporation as a project manager.

'09 Chelsea Howlett-Weideman received the 2012 Recent Alumni Award at the Alumni Association Awards Luncheon during Homecoming weekend. Chelsea is program director for the Noyes Home for Children in St. Joseph, Mo. She earned her master's in art therapy & counseling from Avila University in 2009.

'09 Ruth Dupree lives in Delaware and, after earning her undergraduate degree from Avila, joined the military and continued her education by earning a master's degree. She is working on her Ph.D. in public health.

'09 Miranda (Derleth) Tamburello works as a substance abuse counselor in the Kansas City area. She will complete her master's degree from Avila in December, 2013.

'09 Kayle Walker returned home to Colorado after graduation. She began her marketing career for a commercial construction company before relocating to Breckinridge, Colo. to pursue a marketing position at Paffrath & Thomas Real Estate. She earned her real estate license in 2012 and loves her new career.

'10 Bryan Salsgiver received the 2012 School of Education Alumni Award at the Alumni Association Awards Luncheon during Homecoming. Bryan earned his bachelor's in business education and is a teacher at Washington High School in Kansas City, Kan. Bryan was also recently named his school's teacher of the month.

'11 Elaine (Bahr) Neis recently joined Kingswood Senior Living Community in Kansas City, Mo. as its head of marketing and move-in coordinator.

'11 Jake Zinn was recently elected to the Avila Alumni Association Board of Directors. Jake is an account executive at Townsend Communications in addition to acting as a fundraising consultant for Rainy Day Books and InterUrban Art House. Jake and his wife, Sydney, recently welcomed their first child, Jet Carter Zinn Nov. 13, 2012. Jet weighed 7 pounds, 14 ounces.

'12 Sherri Enright received the 2012 School of Business Alumni Award at the Alumni Association Awards Luncheon during Homecoming Weekend. Sherri holds her bachelor's in political science from the University of Kansas, her law degree from the University of Iowa and her master's in business administration from Avila University. In 2012, she was named Avila's Outstanding MBA student. In 2013, she served as chairperson for Win for KC Women's 19th Annual Sports Award Celebration Luncheon.

'12 Trisha Simmons was a recipient of a gold MarCom award. The MarCom Awards are a creative competition open to individuals or companies involved in creating communication concepts, writing and design of print, visual, and audio programs. Trish's winning entry was a class project for her corporate communication class.

'12 Bailey Pyle graduated with a master's in art therapy counseling from Southern Illinois University-Edwardsville and is working for the state of Missouri at Hawthorn Children's Psychiatric Hospital as a recreational therapist while also working towards her counseling license.

'12 Farahnaz Jiwani is a full-time day-shift registered nurse on the telemetry unit at Olathe Medical Center in Olathe, Kan.

in memoriam

'70 Ethel (Rich) Weddle passed away Oct. 19, 2012. She earned a bachelor of science from Avila University, then Avila College, in 1970. She spent 18 years teaching kindergarten in Grandview, Mo. public schools.

'73 Marilyn J. (Marcum) Looney passed away on Feb. 21, 2013, in Wisconsin with her husband, Bill, at her side. Their daughter, Julia, was always close by. Marilyn was a captain in the United States Army and was one of the first female officers in the Army Chemical Corps. Her Avila family remembers her dream of living in Germany, and she was able to do just that with her husband, Major Bill Looney, during their time in the Army.

'75 Mary Therese (Byrne) Ismert passed away Sept. 12, 2012. She was a graduate of Saint Teresa's Academy, class of 1971, and received her bachelor of science in nursing from Avila College in 1975. Therese was a lifelong member of Christ the King Parish, where she and her husband met and raised their children.

'77 Maggie J. Brown -Tramble passed away Sept. 2, 2012. Maggie graduated from Central High School in 1972 and furthered her education at Avila College, graduating with a bachelor of science in nursing in 1977. During her career, she worked at several hospitals, the Kansas City Health Department, and retired from Unified Government Health Department.

'82 Hedwig (Deschermeier) Pullman, passed away April 3, 2010. Hedy earned her bachelor's degree in social work from Avila College. Hedy was an artist working with oils, water colors, ceramics and miniature tapestry and frequently had her work on display at Avila University.

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Cheer Team National Champions!



Dance team also nabs two top-five finishes at prestigious event in Florida

The Avila University Cheer Team made history when it won at the Universal Cheerleading Association/Universal Dance Association National Championships Jan. 19 in Orlando, Fla.

It marks the first time an Avila Eagles cheer team has won a UCA national title. The Eagles placed fourth at the competition in both 2010 and 2012.

The Avila Dance Team, the Glitter Girls, who won a national championship in 2005, earned two top-five finishes at this year's competition, placing third in the nation in hip-hop and fifth in jazz.

The Eagles cheerleaders competed against nine other semifinalist teams in

the All Girl Open Division, which included teams from NCAA Division III, NAIA and junior college schools. According to Coach Melissa Shipman, the Eagles sat in third place after a semifinal round in which they removed a couple of the more difficult stunts from their routine. They re-inserted those more difficult tricks for the final round, and it paid off. Despite a small mistake at the very end

of the routine, the Eagles capitalized with their degree of difficulty.

"We had a girl go off a shoulder stand at the end," Shipman said. "We knew our routine was harder, but thought the penalty would be so high that it would knock us way down. Our main competition absolutely hit their routine. When they said that team finished second and we realized we'd won, it was the most amazing time in our lives.

"It was a great moment for sure. It was a huge honor for us, and a great thing for Avila to see how hard all these girls worked." 🏆

Members of the Cheer Team are: **Aimee Adams**, junior, Independence, Mo.; **Erica Bales**, freshman, Independence, Mo.; **Natalie Bristow**, junior, Kansas City, Mo.; **Morgan Brucks**, junior, Glasgow, Mo.; **Shawnalee Criss**, junior, Topeka, Kan.; **Lacey Dalton**, freshman, Creighton, Mo.; **Breanne Evans**, senior, San Diego; **Shelby Fletcher**, junior, Independence, Mo.; **Courtney Hansen**, freshman, Overland Park, Kan.; **Jackie Jimenez**, freshman, Iowa City, Iowa; **Kelsey Kattau**, sophomore, Bucyrus, Kan.; **Megan Linder**, senior, Sheridan Lake, Colo.; **Jessica Lomaglio**, freshman, Lee's Summit, Mo.; **Erin Lundquist**, freshman, Camdenton, Mo.; **Courtney Morgan**, junior, Raymore, Mo.; **Kaylen Peltier**, junior, Kansas City, Mo.; **Kristen Raney**, freshman, Camdenton, Mo.; **Anna Roberts**, freshman, Grain Valley, Mo.; **Skylar Roberts**, sophomore, Grain Valley, Mo.; **Sarah Rubin**, sophomore, Overland Park, Kan.; **Gina Scaletty**, freshman, Lee's Summit, Mo.; **Amyliah Smith**, freshman, Independence, Mo.; **Paige Snyder**, senior, Kearney, Mo.; **Dessie Sprouse**, freshman, Columbia, Mo.; **Gabby Sysavath**, sophomore, Lee's Summit, Mo.; and **Shakaila Wright**, sophomore, Independence, Mo.

Chew on This

Basketball coach says he “matured” at Avila

It’s safe to say that, in the mid-1990s, Isaac Chew was a bit of a lost soul.

Growing up on the mean streets of Chicago, Chew, who today is an assistant coach with the Marquette University men’s basketball team, is the first to admit he didn’t always stay on the straight and narrow.

Basketball was a salvation and eventually took him away from the dangers of the streets. He played two seasons at Iowa Lakes Community College in Estherville before enrolling at Westmar University, a small, private, liberal arts college in Le Mars, Iowa. He played a season there, but before his second season had a chance to begin, the university suddenly closed. Chew again found himself adrift, without a home base.

He decided to resume his basketball career in Topeka, Kan. when he received a call from out of the blue.

“I was on my way to Washburn to play there, but (then Avila University men’s basketball coach) Jim Huber Sr. called me and asked me to stop by Avila before I headed on west,” Chew said over the phone from his office in Milwaukee, Wisc.

“I never got to Washburn.”

Instead, Chew decided to enroll at Avila. He said it was one of the best decisions he ever made.

“I was at a place in my life where I was trying to mature,” he said. “The people there were really good to me. Everyone there was really genuine. They helped me to get focused on what I wanted to do with my life.”

Chew, a 6-foot-3 guard/forward, played one season of basketball at Avila. And, though the season wasn’t entirely successful, he described it as “the best situation I could be in.” More important to his immediate future, Chew graduated in May 1999 with a bachelor’s degree in business administration/marketing.

He spent the next seven years working as an analyst at the Kansas City Housing Authority and Kansas University Medical Center and as a branch manager at Bank of America. But the lure of basketball never wandered too far.

“People around (Kansas City) were always asking me to coach AAU teams,” Chew said. “I got my name out there and started having some success.”

It wasn’t until he started assisting Avila head basketball coach Anthony Hall in 2003, however, that Chew said he started taking coaching really seriously. He assisted Hall for three seasons and was an invaluable contributor to the Eagles’ success.

“He was an unbelievable coach,” said Hall, who is now associate athletic director at Fontbonne University in St. Louis, Mo., Avila’s sister university. “He was great with the kids. He just knew how to communicate. And, he always talked about the academics.

“He was so energized and motivated. He brought a lot of energy to the court. He’ll probably have his own team in four or five years.”

Chew left Kansas City in 2007 to coach at Indian Hills Community College in Ottumwa, Iowa, where he helped the Warriors to 34 victories and a trip to the 2007 NJCAA Division I national tournament. That was followed by four seasons on the coaching staff at Murray State in Murray, Ky., where he helped the Racers win back-to-back Ohio Valley Conference titles and reach the NCAA tournament in 2010.

Prior associations with a talented group of players on his old club team opened the door for him to become an assistant last year for Coach Frank Haith at the University of Missouri, where he helped the Tigers to a 30-win season and Big 12 Tournament title. He left there to join the staff at Illinois, but was there only six weeks before Coach Buzz Williams lured him away to Marquette, where Chew serves as Williams’ top recruiter.

But it was at Avila where Chew grew to become the coach he is today.

“I had gone through a lot through high school and college,” he said. “I made a lot of mistakes ... ignorant, immature decisions ... before I came to Avila. Avila was just a great place for me to get my head on straight and grow up. It was great for me.”



Marquette assistant coach and former Avila player and assistant coach Isaac Chew can get pretty animated on the sideline during a game.

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Steve Sirridge, Ph.D.
Professor, School of Psychology

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To find out more about joining Avila's Heritage Society or the gift vehicles above, please contact Keith Jaloma, director of major gifts, at 816-501-3696.

For longtime psychology professor Stephen Sirridge, Ph.D., a career in education was a birthright. His parents both were physicians who helped found the medical school at the University of Missouri-Kansas City. His brother is a high school teacher at St. Teresa's Academy in Kansas City, Mo. His sister is a professor at Louisiana State University. He has been married to a teacher for 40 years.

Sirridge was born to be an educator, which is exactly what he's been at Avila University for 38 years.

"I found a home here at Avila," said Sirridge, who also runs his own private counseling practice when not at the University. "I found the right mix of teaching and independent practice and blend the two. Here at Avila, there is acceptance of that. In fact, it's reinforced."

Because of his family's rich tradition as educators, Sirridge especially is proud to have his name on the Stephen T. Sirridge Endowed Psychology Scholarship, which is awarded to an Avila psychology graduate or undergraduate student annually. The scholarship, which actually was the idea of Frank Yeatman, Ph.D., past chair of the Avila psychology department, and created during Sirridge's 25th year teaching at Avila, had its endowment spearheaded by Sirridge's parents.

"My parents always were strong supporters of higher education," he said. "Anything that honors higher education is something that my family is invested in."

In fact, Sirridge proudly said that his mother, Dr. Marjorie Sirridge, is still doing some teaching in UMKC's medical school at the age of 91.

Sirridge's teaching career at Avila is soon coming to an end. He is scheduled to deliver his "Last Lecture" on April 19, and current and former faculty, students and friends have been invited to celebrate with him and help raise funds for the scholarship that bears his name.

"When I began the year, retirement was an abstract concept," he said. "Moving closer to the day has brought a whole new reality to the situation."

"There's a lot of reflection. Watching people as they move through the program, reach their goals and move out and make their contributions has been rewarding."



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